Immigration Detention and COVID-19 Timeline

Administration Fails to Heed Warnings, Worsens Spread of Coronavirus

February

■ 25: Dr. Allen & Dr. Rich, detention medical experts and consultants to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), warn the agency of public health risks of ICE detention facilities

March

■ 13: Dr. Allen & Dr. Rich again express concerns to DHS about ICE detention

Open letter from medical professionals to ICE urges releases to mitigate COVID-19 harms

■ 15: The immigration judges union, ICE trial attorney union, and the American Immigration Lawyers Association call for the closure of immigration courts to prevent coronavirus spread

■ 17: Human Rights First, Physicians for Human Rights, and Amnesty International USA write to DHS and ICE leadership urging release of asylum seekers and immigrants due to coronavirus threat

■ 19: A Bergen County sheriff's officer tests positive for COVID-19; statement says no ICE detainees were exposed

First employee at ICE facility tests positive for coronavirus (Elizabeth Detention Center, Elizabeth, NJ)

■ 20: DHS medical experts/whistleblowers write to Congress, White House Task Force, urge releases from ICE detention to prevent coronavirus spread

ICE officials concede during briefing to House Committee on Oversight that ICE has "no contingency plan for coronavirus treatment if local hospitals become overwhelmed and cannot treat detainees"

■ 22: Inmates test positive for coronavirus at New Jersey jail also housing ICE detainees

■ 22: Former Acting ICE Director Jon Sandweg writes recommending release of "thousands of nonviolent, low-risk detainees currently in ICE custody," explaining that "ICE can reduce the overcrowding of its detention centers, and thus make them safer, while also putting fewer people at risk"

■ 24: First ICE detainee tests positive for coronavirus (Bergen County Jail, Hackensack, NJ)

April

■ 3: Medical and human rights experts continue to call for release of ICE detainees

■ 10: Reports of guards at privately-owned Otay Mesa Detention Center denying masks to detainees if they refuse to sign a form absolving the company of liability should they become infected

■ 17 "Acting [ICE] Director Albence state[s] that '[their] review… has been completed…' ICE doesn't plan to release any other detainees to slow the spread of coronavirus."

Public health experts continue to call for releases from ICE detention

■ 23: Judge orders population reduction in ICE detainees at Adelanto, California facility

- 25: Guard at a private detention facility used to jail immigrants in Monroe, Louisiana <u>dies</u> after contracting COVID-19 (Richwood Correctional Facility, Monroe, LA)

- 28: Second guard at Richwood Correctional Facility <u>dies</u> after contracting COVID-19

- 30: Miami judge orders ICE to <u>reduce</u> population in three Florida detention centers to allow for social distancing (Krome Detention Center, Broward Transitional Center, Glades County Detention Center)

May

- 6: First detainee <u>dies</u> from coronavirus (Otay Mesa Detention Center, San Diego, CA)

- 13: Acting DHS Secretary Chad Wolf <u>says</u> "What we're not going to do is release all of the detainees in our care."

- 14: Elizabeth Detention Center guard reported to have <u>died</u> from COVID-19

  ICE transfers 16 detainees from Krome Detention Center to Broward Transitional Center, where they test <u>positive</u> for COVID-19 an hour later

- 15: Class action <u>suit</u> filed demanding release of all detainees at Elizabeth Detention Center due to unsafe conditions during pandemic

- 26: ICE <u>denies</u> its transfer policy is contributing to spread of COVID-19

- 27: "ICE <u>admits</u> to transferring detainees with COVID-19, says it can't test everybody"

- 28: Five percent one-day <u>increase</u> in positive cases in ICE detention

- 31: ICE transfers of detainees have led to <u>outbreaks</u> in detention centers in five states - Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Ohio, and Texas

June

- 1: 1,461 detainees have <u>tested</u> positive for COVID-19 out of 2,781 tested overall (52.5%); 44 ICE employees at detention centers positive for COVID-19, 123 other ICE employees test positive