

By Kevin Amerman
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Wrongful death suit planned in one of four prison deaths

The family of a Lehigh County Prison inmate who died in October has notified the city it intends to file a wrongful death lawsuit.

Family members of David A. Campbell on Wednesday filed a writ of summons in Lehigh County Court, naming the county, its department of corrections and prison Director Edward Sweeney in a planned wrongful death lawsuit. Campbell was one of four inmates to die in the jail since August.

The court documents say Campbell died "following an alleged incident wherein the staff at the prison sprayed Mr. Campbell with pepper spray and tied him to a restraint chair" on Oct. 29.

The writ does not contain a complaint, but notifies the defendants that one is in the pipeline. Along with the writ, **David Inscho**, an attorney for **Kline & Specter** in Philadelphia, filed "pre-complaint" requests for several documents and materials, including a list of employees who interacted with Campbell in any way the day he died; medical records, logs, psychological records and disciplinary records involving Campbell; and any videos or photographs taken of Campbell on Oct. 29.

Inscho also requested the prison's policies regarding the use of restraints and pepper spray, conflict resolution and suicide prevention. The attorney, who could not immediately be reached for comment Wednesday, also wants any documents regarding Campbell's death and his autopsy report.

The writ was filed on behalf of Fanae Marrero, the parent of Sarai Taliyah Campbell — a minor and beneficiary of Campbell's estate. Joan Samuels, another beneficiary, is also listed as a plaintiff.

The filing says attorneys from Kline & Specter plan on holding a deposition with an unnamed "representative of the Lehigh County Department of Corrections" next month at the Lehigh County Bar Association's headquarters in Allentown. Sweeney, who was unaware of the writ until a reporter called him about it Wednesday afternoon, said he has scheduled a deposition for that day.

Sweeney said he's aware Campbell's family hired attorneys and the attorneys were looking for information, but said news of the writ is "unfortunate."

Campbell, 25, died after a struggle with corrections officers who were trying to put him in a suicide-watch cell because he was exhibiting "bizarre behavior" indicating he might harm himself, a news release from the prison after Campbell's death said.

An autopsy failed to determine Campbell's cause of death and a final determination is pending forensic toxicology tests for drugs and other substances.

"What's clear from the autopsy is there was no injury that caused the death," Sweeney said. "We're hoping the

toxicology reports reveal the cause."

Campbell of Allentown had been in jail since July on charges he held a woman hostage while physically and sexually assaulting her. Most of the serious charges were dropped following a preliminary hearing in August. He was being held under \$50,000 bail on two counts of simple assault and one count each of prohibited offensive weapons, terroristic threats, reckless endangerment, resisting arrest and harassment.

Shortly after Campbell died, Sweeney said Campbell refused to remove his prison jumpsuit and put on a suicide prevention smock, which is required on suicide watch because the smock can't be torn and made into a noose.

The prison said Campbell became combative and officers sprayed him with pepper foam before placing him in a restraint chair. He became unresponsive 10 minutes later. A prison nurse tried to revive him with CPR and an automated external defibrillator. Paramedics arrived and took him to Sacred Heart Hospital in Allentown, where he was pronounced dead at 12:19 a.m. on Oct. 30.

Three other inmates have died at the prison since the summer. The Jan. 2 death of Andrew Czonstka, 25, of Washington Township, Lehigh County, has been ruled a suicide. The Aug. 17 death of prisoner Tyquann S. McCord, 32, of Allentown was due to natural causes, a pre-existing disease, authorities have said.

The death investigation of Travis A. Magditch, 27, of Fountain Hill, who died in the prison on Jan. 5, is also pending toxicology reports.