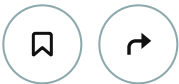




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A 9-year-old boy died in Arizona foster care after his grandmother claims his insulin monitor was taken away

Katherine Tangalakis-Lippert Jan 18, 2023, 4:44 PM



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In this photo, a man is seen assisting a young boy with his insulin implant, a wearable device used to monitor blood sugar levels. Jakob Blodgett was fitted with a similar device to manage his Type-1 diabetes. Reuters/Brian Snyder



Within two weeks in state care, the 9-year-old died of ketoacidosis, a diabetes-related illness.

Now his father is seeking answers from the system that was meant to keep his son safe.

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When 9-year-old Jakob Blodgett was taken from his father's custody, the move was supposed to keep him safe.



after police found nearly 4,000 narcotic pills in his vehicle, according to the local news outlet [White Mountain Independent](#). He was charged with felony county of possessing a narcotic for sale, prompting the removal of his child.

His son, a Type-1 diabetic, was placed in a foster home by the Arizona Department of Child Services (DCS). Two weeks later, Blodgett received a call that his son was on life support. Jakob had developed a life-threatening complication called ketoacidosis, producing a toxic level of excess blood acids. He was declared brain dead on December 23, WMI [reported](#).

The elder Blodgett told the [Associated Press](#) he had been using fentanyl for chronic pain management after losing 300 pounds through weight loss surgery.

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"I wasn't getting high," Blodgett said. "I wasn't abusing them. I was using them to be able to work and provide for my son. Unfortunately, they are illegal. I can't get around that. But they were stronger than my meds, and they were working."

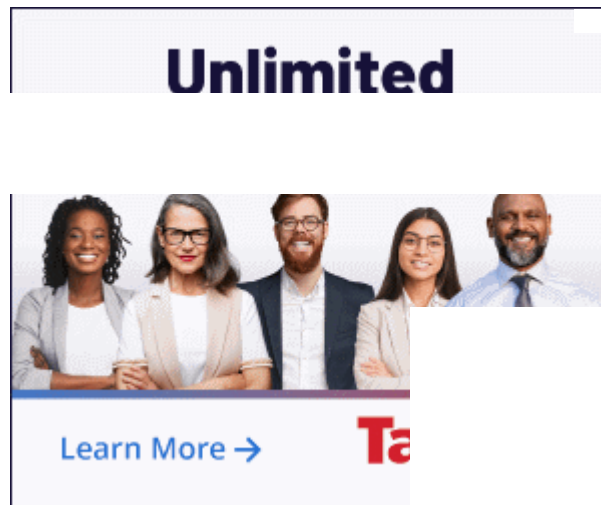
Blodgett, speaking to the AP, was distraught.

"They couldn't keep him alive for two weeks, two weeks," he said. "That's absolutely insane. That was my pride and joy. I'm lost. I'm completely lost. My family is completely lost."

The Maricopa Sheriff's Office confirmed to Insider it is investigating the case. Blodgett was granted a furlough from jail to bury his son, who died on December 23.

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Cheryl Doenges, Jakob's grandmother, alleged in an interview with the Independent that a child-services worker had informed her that the child's insulin monitor had been taken from him because he was "playing with it." She said her son and grandson were "inseparable" since the boy's mother had become estranged from the family. Legal action is being considered, she added.

Darren DaRonco, a spokesperson for DCS, told the AP that, prior to housing a child with a medical condition, foster parents are generally required to receive training from a medical provider. He did not answer questions about whether the boy's insulin monitor had been removed or if his doctor had been consulted regarding his care.

DaRonco did not immediately respond to Insider's request for comment.

In the last two fiscal years, a total of 40 children have died while in DCS custody, according to an AP review. That number — which includes overdoses as well as both natural and undetermined causes — amounts to a fatality rate of about 97 per 100,000 children during that period.



In 2020, the average fatality rate nationwide was 55 per 100,000 children.

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