

Newark man dies in Union County Jail

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A Newark man died suddenly in the Union County Jail today shortly after seeing his fiancée at the jail's visitor center in Elizabeth, authorities said.

An autopsy determined, pending toxicological tests, that Addison Wilcox, 33, of Schuyler Avenue, died as a result of "cardiac arrhythmia due to an enlarged heart," said Union County spokesman Sebastian D'Elia.

Wilcox collapsed in the visiting area on the fifth floor of the jail and was taken to Trinitas Hospital, where he was declared dead, D'Elia said.

Wilcox was arrested in Elizabeth just over a year ago and charged, along with two other men, with possession of just under 10 grams of cocaine and just under a third of a gram of marijuana, according to Union County Assistant Prosecutor Eileen Walsh.

He was sentenced May 30 on drug charges and was scheduled to be transferred to a state facility. He was to serve three years in state prison.

In 2006, Wilcox was placed on three years' probation after pleading guilty for heroin possession, Walsh said. State records show he had other drug convictions dating to 1995.

Newark attorney Gerald Saluti, who represented Wilcox, said members of the family told him that Wilcox had been complaining since Monday of having shortness of breath and upper respiratory problems.

"The family complained that nothing was done about it," Saluti said.

"I saw him the day he went into the jail. He was as healthy as a horse. He had no respiratory problems whatsoever," the attorney said. "From speaking to the family, it sure doesn't look like he got the attention he needed."

Saluti said his law firm intended to investigate Wilcox's death "to see that everything that could be done, was done." But the autopsy may find Wilcox's death was inevitable, the attorney said.

"There may have been nothing anyone on God's green earth could have done," Saluti said.