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VA INVESTIGATION

Udall: VA chief 'must step down'

U.S. Sen. Mark Udall becomes first Senate Democrat to call for Shinseki to resign.

By Nick Coltrain
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U.S. Sen. Mark Udall joined the chorus calling for the ousting of the Veterans Affairs chief Wednesday following the preliminary release of an investigation into patient care.

"Significant delays in access to care negatively impacted the quality of care" at the Phoenix VA Health Care System, according to the Vet-

erans Health Administration's Office of Inspector General. The Fort Collins VA clinic also faced charges of patient delays and scheduling appointments in a way that hid the wait times, though this report only focused on Phoenix.

"The inspector general's preliminary report makes it clear that the systemic problems at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs are so en-

trenched that they require new leadership to be fixed. Secretary Shinseki must step down," Udall, D-Colo., said in a statement. "We need new leadership who will demand accountability to fix these problems and ensure the VA is providing Coloradoans the services they've earned."

Udall, a member of the Senate Armed Forces Committee, was the first Senate Democrat to call for VA Secretary Eric Shinseki's ousting.

U.S. Rep. Cory Gardner, Udall's Republican challenger in a re-election bid, urged Shinseki to resign on May 8, as have many others in Con-

gress.

"Now that Senator Udall has joined my call, I am hopeful the president relieves Secretary Shinseki of his post," Gardner said in a statement Wednesday.

The VA clinic in Fort Collins and its overseeing Cheyenne, Wyoming, VA Medical Center are under follow-up investigation following the leak of an inspection report that found manipulated and deleted data, apparently in an effort to hide wait times. A spokesperson with the OIG said that review likely will finish in August.

A former employee of the Fort

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Report: VA patient care was compromised in Arizona.

Collins VA notified federal investigators of the problems after she said she was punished for not "cooking the books." VA officials said they were "deeply concerned" by the allegations but did not comment further due to it being a personnel issue.

Cheyenne director Cynthia McCormack said earlier this month

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U.S. Sen. Mark Udall

"Que no espere a una tragedia para decirle a alguien que le ama."
(It's important not to wait for a tragedy to tell someone you love them.)

ANA CANTO
mother to Cristopher Alania, who drown on Monday



Family mourns future without bright teen and his role model

By Jason Pohl
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GREELEY — Cristopher Alania's mother, Ana Canto, clutches a photo of a fifth-grade science project her son made from a soda bottle that demonstrates how tornadoes form. He would have made a great scientist, she said in Spanish, fighting back tears — something she's had to do a lot since Monday.

The seventh-grader at John Evans Middle School in Greeley had good grades, and his teachers always praised him, Ana said. The 14-year-old excelled at math. He wanted to go to college.

Cristopher's father, Freddy Alania, said the boy was always inter-



Above, Ana Canto and her husband, Freddy Alania, clutch a photo of their son, 14-year-old Cristopher Alania, on Wednesday at the couple's apartment in Greeley. Elsa Cruz holds her 4-month-old baby, Lesli Terrel, along with a photo of her husband, Jose. PHOTOS BY JASON POHL/THE COLORADOAN

MEMORIAL FUNDS ESTABLISHED FOR POUDDRE DROWNING VICTIMS

By Jason Pohl
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The family of the 14-year-old Greeley boy who drowned in the Poudre River on Monday is tapping his college fund to help pay for a fitting memorial service. Now they're asking for the community's help.

Cristopher Alania was swept away on Monday by the river while fishing at Ouzel picnic area. The man he saw as an uncle, Jose Terrel, jumped in to try to save him but also drowned. Both families on Wednesday morning said they are struggling to cope with the tragedy, let alone scrape together the funds for funeral arrangements.

Terrel immigrated to the United States in 2001 and has been supporting his wife and 4-month-old baby with money he earned while working on a ranch near Greeley. The rest of his family lives in Peru and is trying to get his body transported home for final arrangements — a process estimated to cost upward of \$20,000.

Donations can be made at any Wells Fargo branch by making a contribution to Jose Terrel's Memorial Fund or the Cristopher Alania Memorial Fund.

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