

Memo

To: Compassionate Transfer Review Committee
From: Juan Rico, Senior Patrol Agent
CC: Martin Smith, Patrol Agent in Charge, Border Patrol Station
Re: **Compassionate Transfer Request**

Purpose

I am a husband and a father of four, working for the past six years for the Department of Homeland Security as GS-11 Border Patrol Agent. Due to a recent diagnosis of a life-threatening heart condition involving an immediate family member, I am left with no other alternative but to urgently request a compassionate transfer to El Paso Station in El Paso, Texas. I am fully prepared to take complete responsibility for all necessary costs involved in the transfer of my family.

Background

Of Hispanic origin, traditionally my culture places a great emphasis on familial relations. As a result, a disruption, or a threat thereof, to the family unit, can be quite devastating to its members, causing unwanted emotional stress, trauma, and illness. Such is the case herewith.

Prior to commencing employment with the Department of Homeland Security, my family and I resided for many years with my mother. A regular resident of our household, my children grew up with her as an integral member of the family structure. The temporary separation from their grandmother, as a result of my accepting employment with the U.S. Border Patrol, was very disturbing to my children, not to mention the effect it had upon my wife and me. However, everyone viewed it as temporary and, at that time, my mother's health was stable. We couldn't afford to turn down the employment opportunity offered by the U.S. Government.

Urgent Condition

Of sixty-seven years of age, my mother currently lives alone and relies upon me entirely for both financial and emotional support. A recent visit to her physician confirmed the diagnosis of a heart condition, called Enlarged Heart, where the heart has grown and continues to grow larger than normal. The definition of this condition, according to the American Heart Association, is as follows:

"As the name suggests, enlarged heart is an increase in the size of the heart. It is detected by physical examination, X-ray or other imaging tests.

An enlarged heart may be caused by a thickening of the heart muscle because of increased workload. (This increased workload can be due to heart valve disease or high blood pressure, for example.) This is called hypertrophy (hi-PER'tro-fe), which refers to enlargement of an organ or tissue due to an increase in cell size.

"Since blood flows more slowly through an enlarged heart, blood clots easily form. A blood clot is also called a *thrombus*. A clot that breaks free, circulates in the

bloodstream, and blocks a small blood vessel is called an *embolus*. **It can cause life-threatening problems in many parts of the body.**

- Clots that stick to the inner lining of the heart are called *mural thrombi*.
- If the clot breaks off in the right ventricle, it can be carried in the pulmonary circulation in the lung, forming *pulmonary emboli*.
- Blood clots formed in the heart's left side may be dislodged and carried into the body's circulation. They can form *cerebral emboli* in the brain, *renal emboli* in the kidney, *peripheral emboli* in the arms or legs, or even *coronary artery emboli* in the heart."

As a direct result of my mother's heart condition, my four children, ages 2, 5, 6, and 9 have suffered immeasurably. The nonstop tears in our household coupled with the lack of interest in school, threats by our eldest to run away, and mental depression has created an extremely disturbing environment. We fear that continued stress and anxiety, brought about by this recent health crisis, could potentially lead to what the professionals call "extreme functional impairment".

According to a U.S. Public Report of the Surgeon General, "caregiver separation" is one of the candidates that offers the greatest risk to children in causing mental disorders and mental health problems. The report also indicates that, "families have become essential partners in the delivery of mental health services for children and adolescents". Depression is defined as, "the persistent experience of a sad or irritable mood and the loss of interest or pleasure in nearly all activities. These feelings are accompanied by a range of additional symptoms affecting appetite and sleep, activity level and concentration, and feelings of self-worth". Studies have demonstrated that, "depression, if left untreated, can lead to school failure, alcohol or other drug use, and even suicide".

Medical Opinions

1. The only way to treat my mother's life-threatening condition is with open-heart surgery. Once the surgery has been completed, a full-time, live-in caretaker would be required to oversee her recovery and maintenance. (Please see attached supporting documents for reference.) On Medicare and an extremely limited budget, my mother's finances do not allow the additional expense of a live-in caretaker or nurse. Given the dire urgency and seriousness of her condition, her physicians strongly recommend that she refrain from any travel, and undergo surgery as quickly as possible.
2. Group therapy has been necessary to assist family members in coping with the recent stress that has been placed upon us, due to the uncertainty of my mother's potentially fatal condition. (Please see attached supporting documents for reference).

Consequences

Since the discovery of my mother's heart condition, the following events have occurred:

- She faced an emergency situation in her home, where she needed immediate attention and no one was able to attend to her. Fortunately, a neighbor heard her calling out and was able to race her to the hospital, where she received proper medical assistance.
- To complicate matters, she has been also diagnosed with hypertension, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and thyroid problems.
- An incredible strain has been placed upon my marital relations.
- I, personally, am affected both physically and emotionally. This includes:
 - a. loss of sleep
 - b. loss of concentration
 - c. mental fatigue
 - d. bodily aches and pains
- My children have been affected both physically and emotionally. There is a great deal of stress, tears, and emotional outbursts over this dire situation we all face.

Conclusion

I currently reside more than ten (10) hours away from the town where my mother resides. Due to the lack of proximity, when an emergency situation arises, it would be impossible for me to attend to her needs. My entire family is now in a panic state, awaiting the news that my mother's condition has gone from bad to worse. We are agitated, on edge, and on a constant emotional roller coaster.

A transfer to the El Paso Station would accomplish the following:

- It would enable my entire family to live with my mother; hence, providing round-the-clock medical attention and support.
- All family members would be given peace of mind, eliminating the emotional stress we currently face.
- With the knowledge that family is nearby, my mother, after the surgery, would have a much higher recovery rate, and would be in a much better position to heal.
- It would eliminate the strain on my marriage and stress on my family.

I am fully aware that, if granted, this transfer will deem me ineligible for either a promotion or transfer for a period of two years from the effective date.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you need further information or have additional questions, please advise immediately. Your compassionate reply is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Juan Rico