HIV in Prisons, 2015 - Statistical Tables

Bureau of Justice Statistics

Summary | NCJ 250641 | August 2017

Approximately 17,150 prisoners in state and federal correctional custody were living with HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) infection at yearend 2015. This was the fewest reported since 1991 (17,680), the first year in which the Bureau of Justice Statistics began collecting HIV data. After the number of prisoners with HIV peaked at 25,890 in 1998, an annual downward trend has continued for more than a decade and a half. The rate of HIV among prisoners in 2015 was 1,297 per 100,000 state and federal prisoners, which was the lowest rate observed during the 25-year period of data collection.

HIV infection by sex

In the most recent 5-year period, the number of male prisoners with HIV declined from an estimated 18,510 in 2010 to 15,920 in 2015. Over the same period, the number of female prisoners with HIV declined from 1,780 to 1,220. While male prisoners experienced a larger decline in the number with HIV during this period, females experienced a larger percentage decline.

AIDS-related mortality trends

The number of AIDS-related deaths among state prisoners fluctuated from 2010 to 2015 from a low of 45 (preliminary count) in 2015 to a high of 74 in 2012. Over the same period, the annual number of AIDS-related deaths among federal prisoners has been less than 10, with one death reported in 2015. Between 2010 and 2015, in both number and rate, more male state prisoners than female and more non-Hispanic black state prisoners than non-Hispanic white and Hispanic state prisoners died from AIDS-related causes.

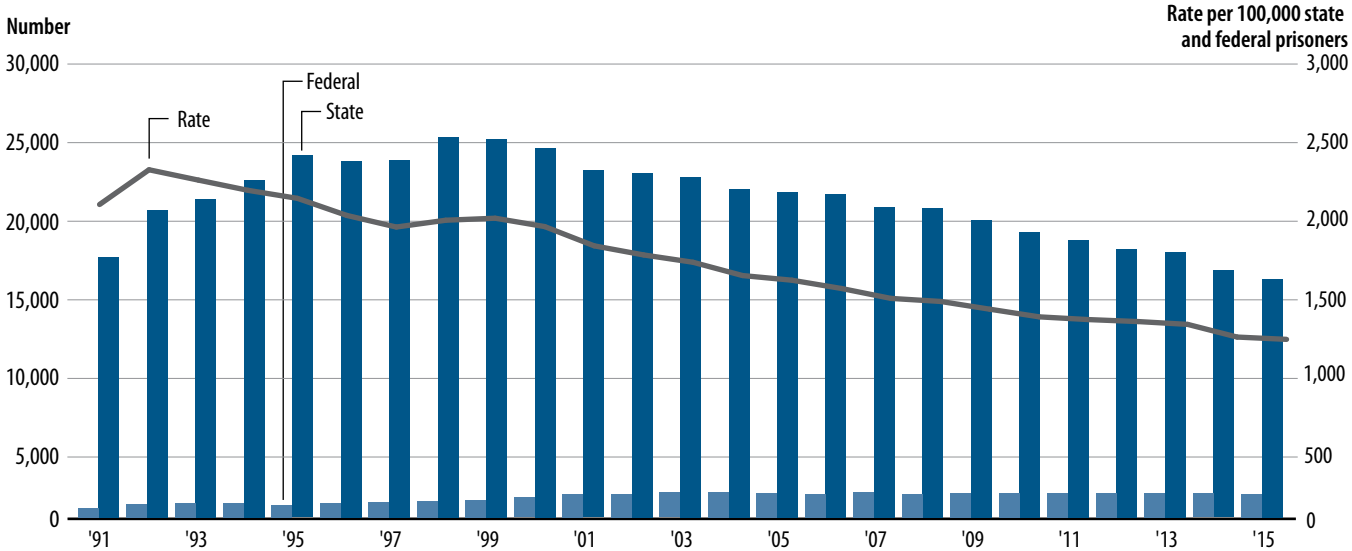
HIV testing in state and federal prisons

During the intake process in 2015, 15 jurisdictions reported that they tested all prisoners for HIV regardless of consent, and 17 reported that all prisoners were offered an HIV test, but they could decline or opt-out of taking the test. This was up from 14 jurisdictions that had mandatory testing and 13 that had opt-out HIV testing in 2011. About two-thirds of prisoners admitted to prison in 2011 and 2015 were admitted to jurisdictions that conducted either mandatory or opt-out testing during the intake process.

In 2011 and 2015, the most common HIV testing practice during the discharge process was testing upon prisoner request, followed by offering a test to all prisoners. About 7 in 10 prisoners released in 2011 and 6 in 10 in 2015 were released from jurisdictions that either tested upon request or offered a test to all prisoners during the discharge process. All responding jurisdictions in 2015 said that they offered an HIV test to prisoners while in custody.

The full report (*HIV in Prisons, 2015 - Statistical Tables,* NCJ 250641), related documents, and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics can be found at www.bjs.gov.

Number of prisoners who had HIV and rate of HIV per 100,000 in the custody of state and federal correctional authorities, 1991–2015



Note: Includes inmates in the custody of state and federal prison authorities that were known to be HIV-positive or had confirmed AIDS.
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Prisoner Statistics Program, 1991–2015.