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# Mortality in Local Jails and State Prisons, 2000-2010 - Statistical Tables

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### MORTALITY RATES IN LOCAL JAILS AND PRISONS DROPPED IN 2010

WASHINGTON– During 2010, 4,150 inmates died while in the custody of local jails and state prisons—a five percent decline from 2009, according to a report released today by the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS).

The mortality rate in local jails declined two percent from 2009 to 2010, dropping from 128 deaths per 100,000 jail inmates to 125 deaths per 100,000. Between 2000 and 2010, the jails

mortality rate fell 17 percent. The number of inmate deaths in local jails declined for the third consecutive year, from a high of 1,100 deaths in 2007 to 918 deaths in 2010.

Jails are operated by local authorities (such as sheriffs' offices or county and city governments) and typically hold persons unsentenced or sentenced to serve one year or less. Prisons are operated by state departments of corrections and generally hold inmates sentenced to more than a year.

The mortality rate in state prisons declined five percent from 2009 to 2010, dropping from 257 deaths per 100,000 prison inmates to 245 deaths per 100,000. This was the largest percentage decline in mortality rates in state prisons since 2001 when the Death in Custody Reporting Program (DCRP) began collecting data on prison deaths. State prisons reported 3,232 inmate deaths in custody in 2010, an increase from 2,869 deaths in 2001.

Between 2001 and 2010, the number of deaths in federal prisons increased from 301 to 387 deaths, a 29 percent increase. The mortality rate in federal prisons decreased from 220 deaths per 100,000 federal prison inmates in 2001 to 179 deaths per 100,000 in 2010, mainly due to the increase in the federal prison population.

In 2010 about 52 percent of deaths in jails and 89 percent of deaths in prisons were due to an illness-related condition—heart disease, AIDS, cancer, liver disease, respiratory diseases, and other illnesses. Deaths due to homicide or accident were less common in prisons or jails compared to other causes of death, comprising less than three percent of deaths in jails or prisons in 2010.

The five leading causes of jail inmate deaths in 2010 were suicide (33 percent), heart disease (26 percent), drug or alcohol intoxication (six percent), cancer (four percent) and liver diseases (three percent). Among prisoner deaths from 2001 to 2010, cancer and heart disease together accounted for about half of all illness-related deaths each year.

The AIDS-related mortality rate of jail inmates declined significantly between 2000 and 2010, falling from 10 deaths per 100,000 inmates to 4 per 100,000. In 2010 AIDS-related deaths were not among the five leading causes of death in jails for the first time since 2000. In state prisons the AIDS-related mortality rate dropped from 23 deaths per 100,000 prisoners to six per 100,000 between 2001 and 2010.

The suicide rate in local jails dropped each year between 2001 and 2007 before increasing in 2009 and 2010. Over the 11-year period between 2000 and 2010, the jail inmate suicide rate

declined 13 percent, from 48 to 42 suicide deaths per 100,000 jail inmates.

Other findings showed—

- Between 2000 and 2010, about a third (32 percent) of deaths in jails due to heart disease and nearly half (48 percent) of suicides occurred within seven days of the inmate's admission to jail.
- From 2008 through 2010, male and female jail inmate mortality rates were about equal, indicating a convergence in the rates over time. In 2010, male state prisoners (254 deaths per 100,000 males) died at twice the rate of female state prisoners (127 deaths per 100,000 females).
- White prison inmates had the highest mortality rate of all racial or ethnic groups between 2001 and 2010, with a mortality rate between 1.4 and 2.4 times higher than any other racial or ethnic group in any single year during the 10-year period.
- Between 2000 and 2010, jail inmates age 55 or older had the highest suicide rate (60 per 100,000), and committed suicide at twice the rate of jail inmates ages 18 to 24 (28 per 100,000), who had the lowest suicide rate.
- In 2010, white jail inmates committed suicide (80 per 100,000) at a rate more than five times the rate of black jail inmates (15 per 100,000) and more than three time the rate of Hispanic jail inmates (25 per 100,000).

The report, *Mortality in Local Jails and State Prisons, 2000-2010–Statistical Tables* (*NCJ 239911*), was written by BJS statistician Margaret E. Noonan. The report, related documents and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics' statistical publications and programs can be found on the BJS website at http://www.bjs.gov/.

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