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DEATHS IN LOCAL JAILS ROSE DURING 2012; STATE PRISON DEATHS REMAINED STABLE

WASHINGTON – During 2012, 958 inmates died while in the custody of local jails, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) announced today. This was an 8 percent increase from the 889 deaths in 2011 and marked the first annual increase in the number of jail deaths since 2009.

State prisons reported 3,351 deaths in 2012, which was nearly equal to the number of deaths (3,353) in 2011. However, due to a decrease in the state prison population, the mortality rate increased 2 percent, from 260 deaths per 100,000 state prisoners in 2011 to 264 deaths per 100,000 in 2012.

Jails are operated by local authorities (such as sheriffs' offices or county and city governments) and typically hold persons not yet sentenced or sentenced to serve one year or less. State prisons are operated by state departments of corrections and generally hold inmates sentenced to more than one year.

During 2012, the local jail mortality rate increased 4 percent, from 123 deaths to 128 deaths per 100,000 inmates. Most jails (81 percent) reported no deaths in 2012, which was consistent with reports in previous years. Among the 538 jail jurisdictions that reported an inmate death, more than two-thirds reported a single death. More than a third of deaths in local jails occurred within 7 days of admission.

Illness-related deaths (such as heart disease, AIDS, cancer, liver disease and respiratory disease) accounted for 55 percent of all deaths in local jails and 88 percent of deaths in state prisons during 2012.

Suicide (31 percent) and heart disease (28 percent) continued to be the leading causes of death in local jails. However, the suicide rate declined from 43 deaths per 100,000 inmates in 2011 to 40 per 100,000 in 2012. This was the first decrease in the suicide rate since 2009.

Heart disease (30 percent) and cancer (24 percent) accounted for the majority of all deaths in state prisons, followed by liver disease (9 percent), respiratory disease (6 percent), suicide (6 percent), homicide (3 percent), AIDS-related deaths (2 percent) and accidents (1 percent).

(MORE)

During 2012, the number and rate of AIDS-related deaths in both local jails and state prisons increased. Despite this increase, AIDS-related deaths have decreased 63 percent in jails since 2000 and 73 percent in prisons since 2001.

Jail inmates age 45 or older experienced the largest increase in mortality among all age groups (up 16 percent) and accounted for about half (51 percent) of all deaths in jails in 2012. State prisoners age 55 or older made up more than half (55 percent) of all deaths in prisons.

The mortality rate for male jail inmates (129 deaths per 100,000) and female jail inmates (123 deaths per 100,000) were nearly equal in 2012. From 2001 to 2012, the average annual mortality rate for male prisoners (260 deaths per 100,000 state prisoners) was 1.7 times higher than for female prisoners (149 per 100,000).

The mortality rate for white jail inmates (220 deaths per 100,000) was two times higher than the rate for black jail inmates (109 per 100,000) and more than 3.5 times higher than the rate for Hispanic jail inmates (60 per 100,000).

The average annual suicide rate for white jail inmates between 2000 and 2012 (80 suicides per 100,000 jail inmates) remained at least three times higher than the rate for black inmates or inmates of Hispanic origin.

The report, *Mortality in Local Jails and State Prisons, 2000–2012 - Statistical Tables* (NCJ 247448), was written by Margaret E. Noonan of BJS and Scott Ginder of RTI. The report, related documents and additional information about BJS statistical publications and programs can be found on the BJS website at <http://www.bjs.gov/>.

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