

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

In Custody Deaths and Mitigation Efforts

HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

MARCH 31, 2025



Presented by:

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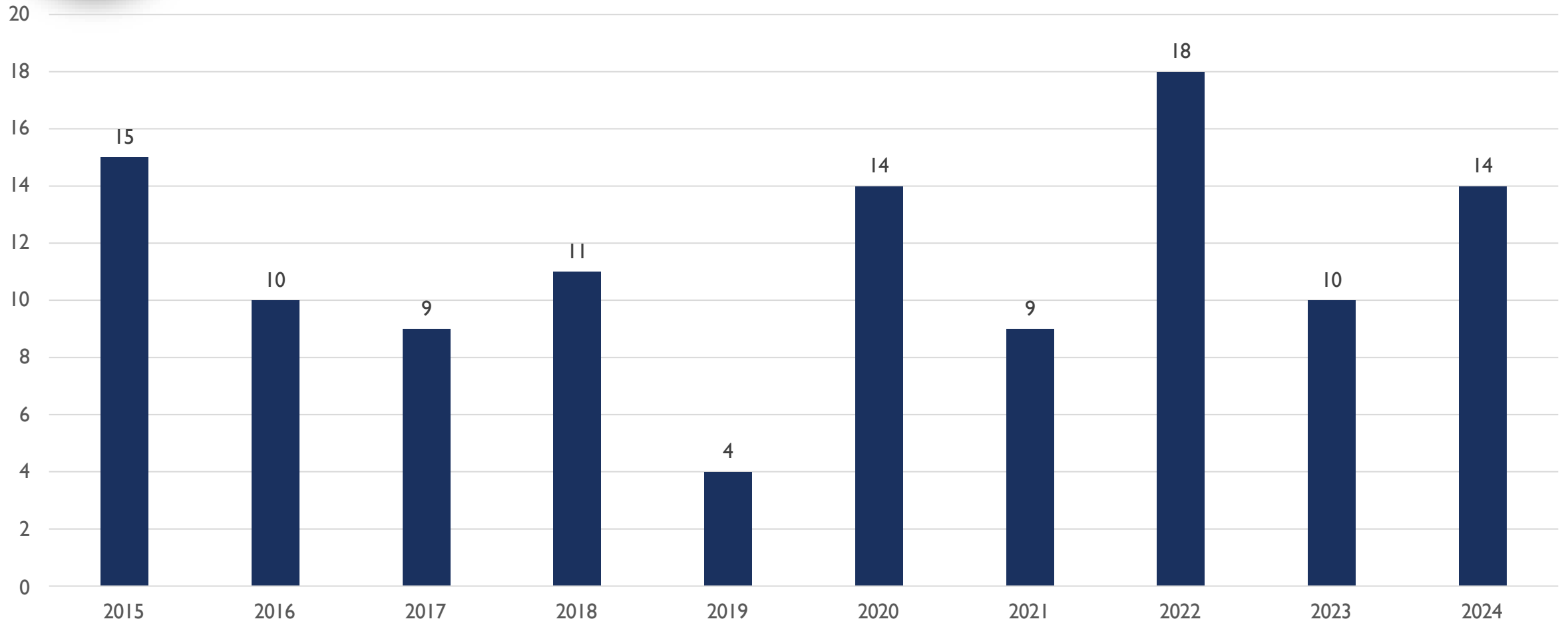


ALASKA STATEWIDE SOCIAL CHALLENGES

- Alaska faces several health challenges including high rates of:
 - Cancer
 - Heart disease
 - High blood pressure
 - High cholesterol
 - Drug overdose (up 44.5% from 2022 to 2023, now 2nd in the nation)
 - Alcohol poisoning (1st in the nation for 2024)
 - Suicide (3rd in the nation for 2022)



IN-CUSTODY DEATHS BY YEAR 2015-2024





DEATHS WHILE IN CUSTODY 2015-2024

DOC books on average between 25,000 and 30,000 offenders into our facilities annually.

Year	Natural		Accidental		Homicide		Suicide		Pending		Total			Inmate Population
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total	
2015	11	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	14	1	15	5034
2016	5	2	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	8	2	10	4664
2017	6	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	8	1	9	4237
2018	6	0	0	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	10	1	11	4311
2019	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	4	0	4	4498
2020	8	1	0	0	0	0	4	1	0	0	12	2	14	4257
2021	6	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	8	1	9	4613
2022	10	1	0	0	0	0	6	1	0	0	16	2	18	4727
2023	8	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	10	0	10	4525
2024	10	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	12	2	14	4417



CHALLENGES OF SERVING INCARCERATED POPULATION

- Concentration of high physical health care needs, substance use disorder, and mental illness
 - 65% living with a mental illness
 - 80% have a substance use disorder
 - Twice as likely to have high blood pressure and related chronic disease
 - More than twice as likely to use tobacco
- Aging Population
 - Age 50+ 2003 10.8%
 - Age 50+ 2023 21.4%



MORTALITY RATES AMONG UNIFIED SYSTEMS

Mortality rate per 100,000 state prisoners, by cause of death, 2001–2019

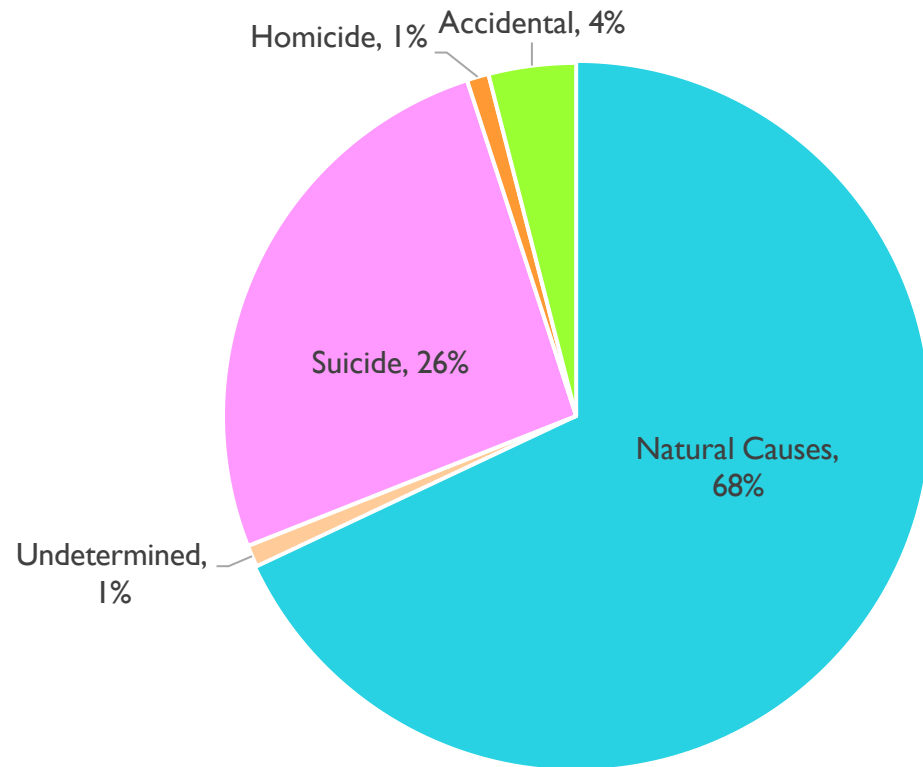
State	All Cause	Heart Disease	Cancer	Liver disease	Suicide	Drug/Alcohol	Homicide
Delaware	231	60	52	20	27	5	2
Vermont	209	54	42	31	31	8	0
Rhode Island	189	44	35	5	44	8	2
Alaska	187	44	30	18	38	10	4
Hawaii	175	33	46	17	28	4	7
Connecticut	151	36	21	21	25	2	2

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Mortality in Correctional Institutions, 2001–2019, and National Prisoner Statistics, 2001–2019; and Federal Bureau of Prisons, 2001–2019.

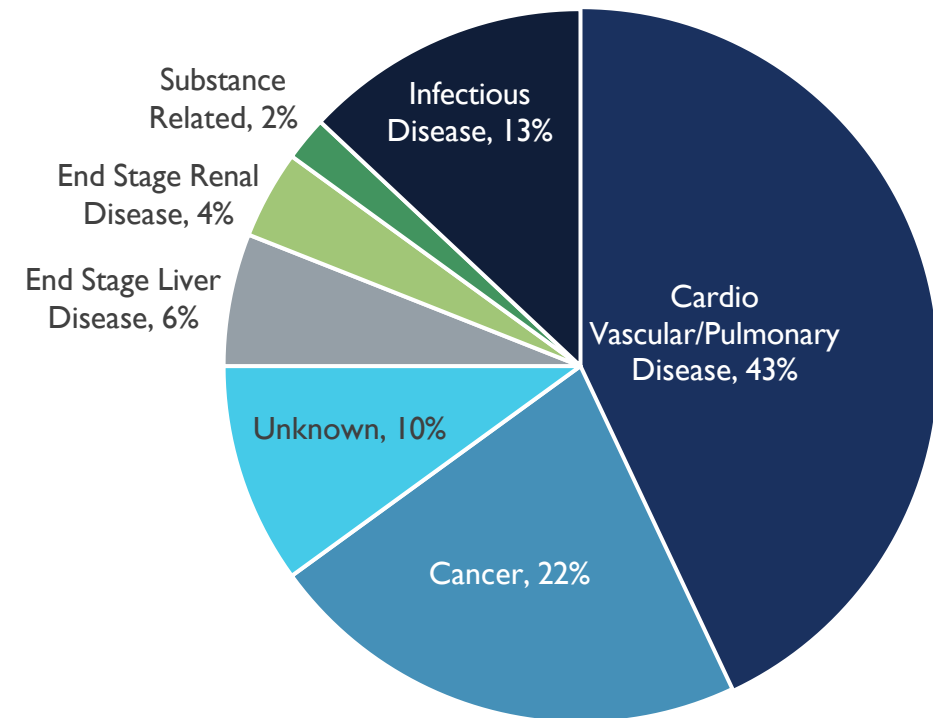


DEATHS WHILE IN CUSTODY 2015-2024

Manner of Death



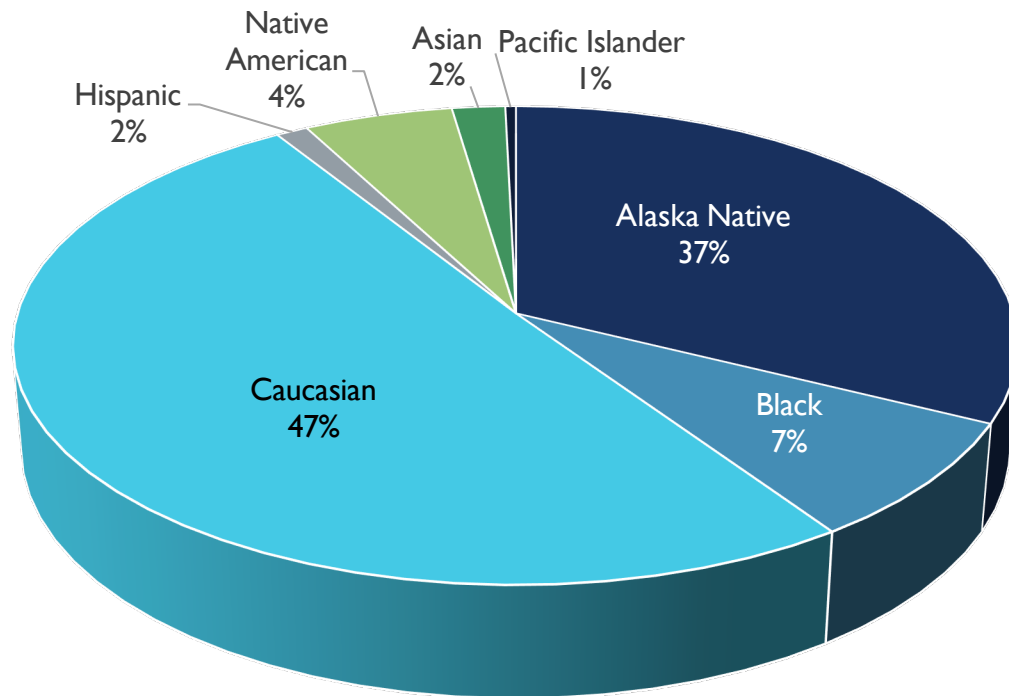
Natural Causes Breakdown



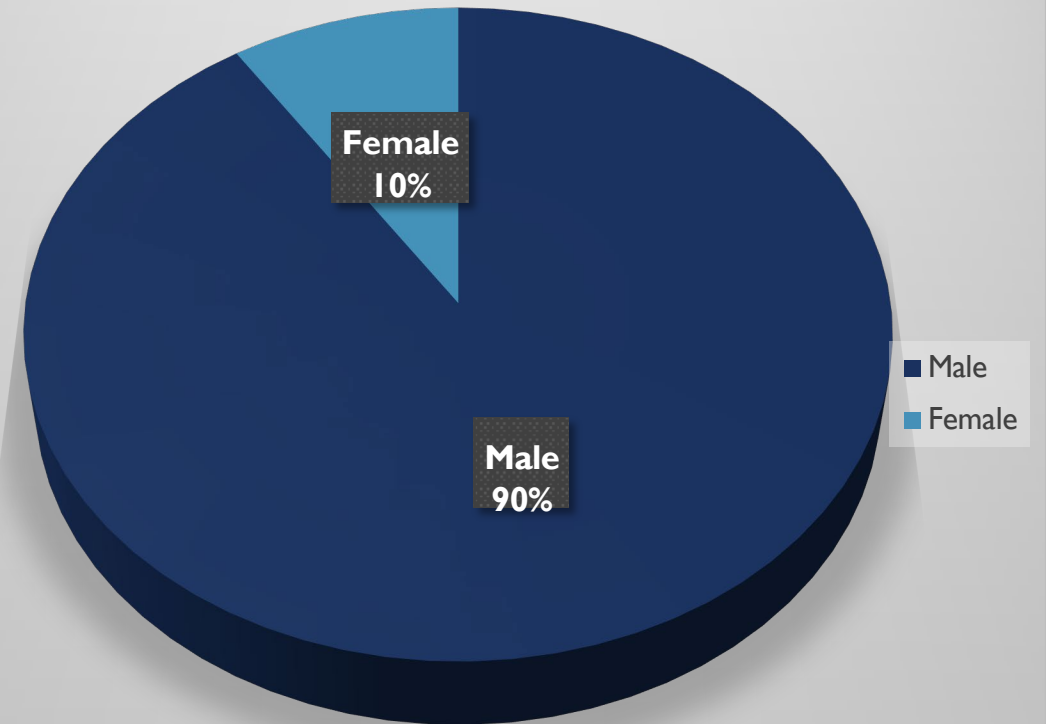


IN-CUSTODY DEATHS DEMOGRAPHICS 2015-2024

In-Custody Deaths by Race



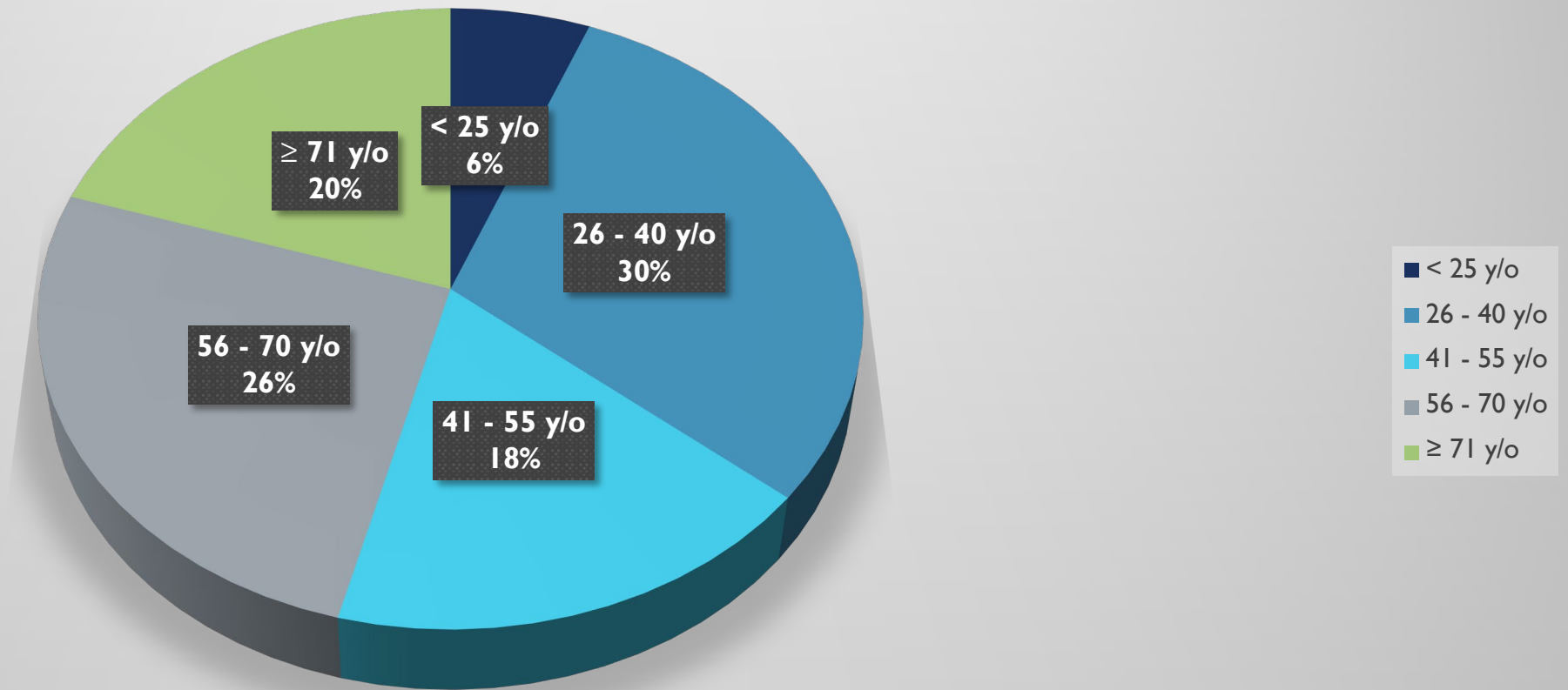
In-Custody Deaths by Gender





IN-CUSTODY DEATHS BY AGE 2015-2024

In-Custody Deaths by Age





MITIGATING EFFORTS

- Updated withdrawal management protocol
- State-wide pre-booking medical screening
- Suicide prevention and mental health efforts
 - Staff and inmate training
 - American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: Project 2025
- Facility Improvements
 - Installation of larger windows in segregation areas
 - Installation of jump barriers
- Critical Incident Reviews
- Department of Public Safety
- Medical Examiners Office



CONTACT INFORMATION

QUESTIONS?

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