

Restore Justice Foundation

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://restorejustice.org/john-howard-association-survey-sheds-light-on-covid-19-in-illinois-prisons/>

Newsletters

We must treat people who are incarcerated with compassion, especially now during the COVID-19 pandemic. But, for nearly three months, incarcerated people and their loved ones have reported a lack of soap and cleaning products, and a lack of adequate healthcare. In order to identify and rectify these injustices, the John Howard Association (JHA) conducted its [first ever Illinois Department of Corrections \(IDOC\) system-wide survey](#). JHA independently monitors IDOC facilities.

It is critical that we know and understand what IDOC has done and what needs to be done to minimize exposure, reduce contagion, and treat those who have been infected. Without this information it is very difficult to hold IDOC accountable for implementation of policies that affect the lives of people in its custody, our advocate partners at JHA explain.

JHA collected 16,236 surveys from people incarcerated in 32 IDOC facilities. The findings match information [Restore Justice has received](#) from people who have incarcerated loved ones.

Thirty-five percent of respondents told JHA they do not have enough soap for regular handwashing. Only about 16% of the incarcerated people who responded say they've received daily cleaning chemicals to keep their sleeping areas sanitary. According to reports Restore Justice has received, some incarcerated individuals are only receiving two sprays of watered down bleach on a cloth as their cleaning supplies.

In addition, 13% of the people who responded to JHA said they had sought healthcare because of COVID-19 in the last week and had not received a response. Restore Justice has received more than 50 reports from incarcerated individuals saying they are not receiving their maintenance or mental health medications for ongoing conditions. In addition, Restore Justices reports show that if an individual is not experiencing a life-threatening emergency or COVID-19 related symptoms, medical professionals are not examining them at this time.

[Read the full survey results.](#)

[If you talk with an incarcerated loved one, fill out Restore Justices tracker.](#)

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