

# **Impact of COVID-19 on U.S. Correctional Systems**

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# Introduction

- US leads the world in incarceration
  - Confinement or imprisonment of individuals
- **2 million** people are imprisoned & **10 million** are in jail at any one time

# Introduction

- Overpopulated correctional facilities are therefore breeding grounds for infectious diseases
  - Lack of funding, resources, etc.
- ex. rates of HIV and hepatitis C virus infection in prisons are 5 and 17–28x higher than in the general population, respectively

# Specific Goals

## Specific aim

Analyze the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on U.S. correctional facilities

1. Compare number of cases between federal vs state & private vs public
2. Identify differences in cases on a state and regional level
3. Compare case rates in correctional vs general populations



# Data Overview

UCLA COVID-19 Behind Bars Project

Specific Dataset:

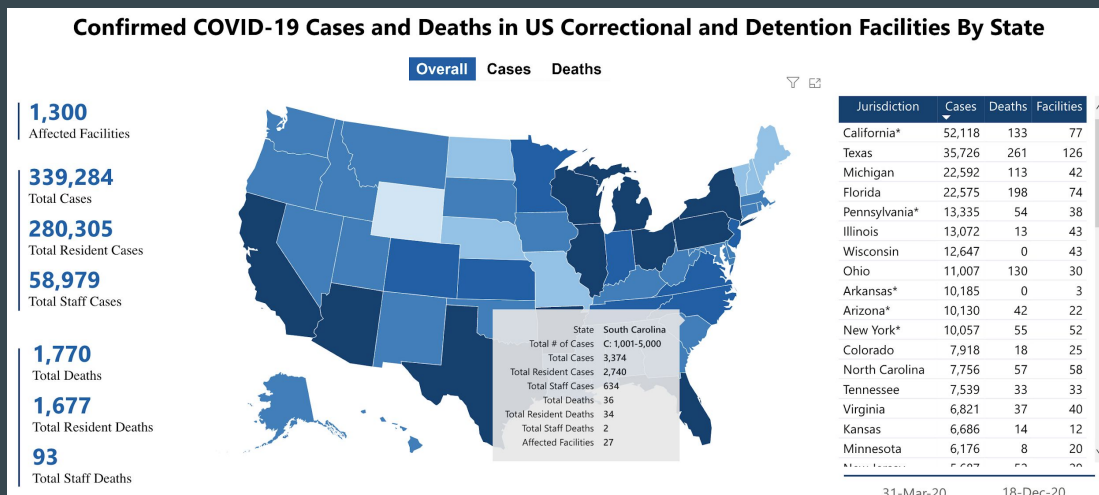
- Prison/Jail Confirmed Cases and Deaths
  - Residents & staff

Additional information from other sources

- e.g. websites for individual correctional facilities, state departments, federal prison system, census bureau, etc.

# Data Overview

- CDC uses this trusted datasource
- Gathers data from individual facilities and state departments
- Frequently updated but lacks data over time



# Data Problems

- Missing values
- Lacked most facility populations
- Required supplemental information
  - Private vs. public
  - Statewide correctional facility population
  - Cases and deaths in general population
- Selected four states to focus on: CA, TX, FL, and AZ
- Varying levels of information for the jurisdictions: county jail, state prison, and federal prison

# **Explore Data Analysis**



# Conclusions

1. Conflicting results obtained regarding federal vs state cases can be attributed to differences in funding and policy between the two
  - a. Lots of confounding variables exist
2. Private prisons maintain a lower amount of cases due to the need to keep costs as low as possible
  - a. Healthcare and testing cost money, need inmates for \$\$\$
3. COVID rates in the general population are not always representative of rates within correctional facilities
  - a. Differences in COVID policies and enforcement

# Implications

- Especially important to focus COVID relief and prevention efforts on public and state prisons
  - PPE for staff, strict visitation policies, proper sanitation
  - Priority for vaccination
- Importance of monitoring cases and deaths for each correctional facility
  - Unable to make conclusions about prisons based on general population
  - Prevent spread from facility to community and vice versa

# Future Analysis

- Gather comprehensive data on correctional facility populations
  - Better for population-based rates
- Research public and private prisons to see if our trends follow throughout the U.S.
- Analyze the effects of releasing inmates. Was it effective or not?
  - Requires data over time and up to date and comprehensive prison population data

# Questions?

Explore our project further: [website link](#)