

The Importance of Accuracy and Reporting of In Custody Deaths in Maryland

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**Data referenced is from UCLA Biocritical Study Labs and
representative, Dr. Terence Keel and his colleagues.**

Problem Statement

- Between the years 2008 - 2019, there have been 180 deaths in Maryland's detention centers.
- Maryland has high barriers to access data pertaining to in custody deaths. Every incarcerated individual deserves to be treated with respect and humanity. We must prioritize accountability and transparency within our legal system.

Policy Context

-The 'Deaths in Custody Reporting Act of 2013, which was presented by Robert Scott , was passed by Congress which requires each state to report the death of any person who is either under arrest or incarcerated.

-Unfortunately, due to loopholes and authorities not properly enforcing the Act, states are not reporting these deaths as required.



Policy Formation

-In 2015, Maryland Governor Larry Hogan signed House Bill 954 into law. This requires each local and state enforcement agency in Maryland to provide the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services annually with information of the identity of both officer and decedent, the situation, and setting.

House Bill 565 was sponsored by numerous Delegates in January 2024, requiring authorities to investigate any death of an incarcerated individual suspected to be a homicide.



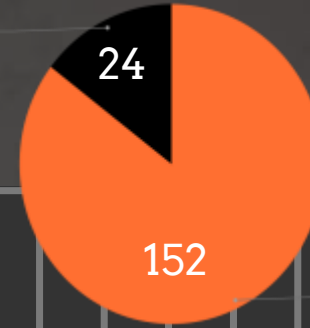
Policy Analysis

Who is it affecting?

- The average age of in-custody deaths between 20- 55 years old, were designated as "natural".
- Over 80% of the deaths in the sample took place as the decedent was awaiting trial, they had not been convicted of the crime at time of death.
- Almost half of the decedents in the sample died within 10 days of entry to the detention center.
- Men that identify as African-American.

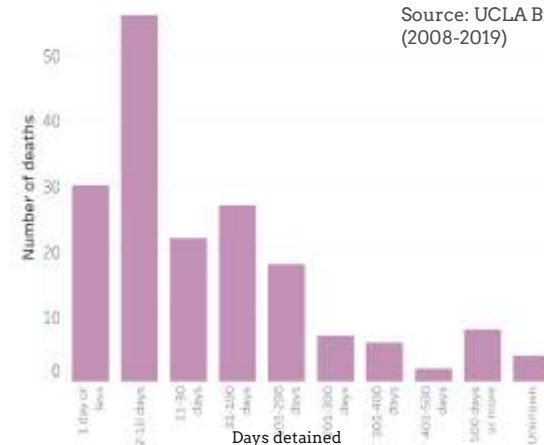
Trail Status At Time Of Death

Convicted
14.6%



Source: UCLA Biocritical Lab -
180 In (2008-2019)

Number of days detained before death

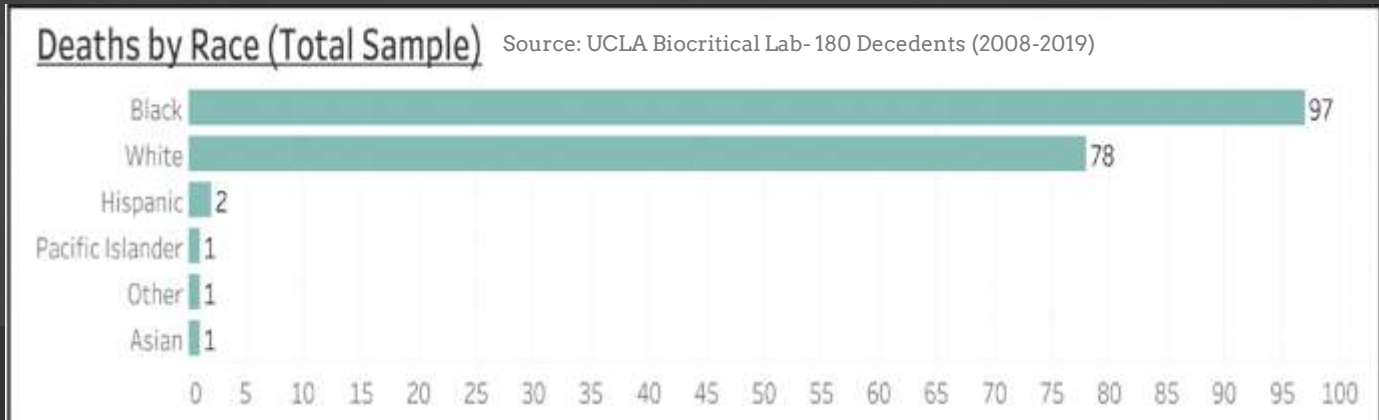


Source: UCLA Biocritical Lab-180 Decedents
(2008-2019)

Policy Analysis

How does race tie into it all ?

- In the state of Maryland, African-Americans make up 30% of the population.
- Black men make over 70% of the detention centers population.
- In the case study of the decedents, over 50% were black men .



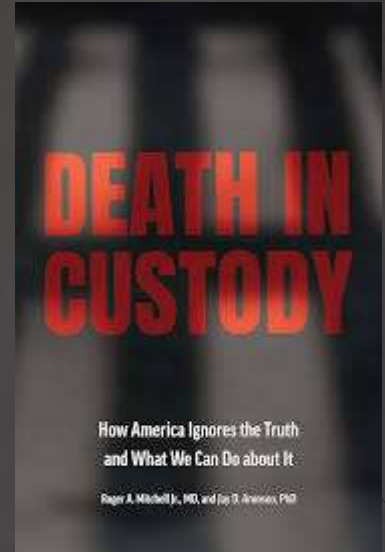
Policy implications

NEGATIVE IMPACTS

- Deaths in custody often erode public trust in law enforcement and the justice system.
- In custody deaths raise questions about the adequacy of medical care provided to individuals in custody
- These incidents can have profound effects on families of the deceased and other incarcerated individuals witnessing the deaths.

POSITIVE IMPACTS

- Policy changes aimed at improving detention centers guidelines and practices.



Recommendations

01

Legislation should establish a public reporting requirement for all in-custody death cases.

02

Indication of cause of death on the public death certificate.

03

Limit the range of charges are eligible for detention .

04

Require facilities to report and publicize deaths within 10 days.

05

Legislation should require the Maryland Office of the Chief Medical Examiner to conduct indepth investigations, including autopsy, for all in- custody deaths

References

- Maryland General Assembly. (2015). Chapter 134 of 2015 (House Bill 954), Public Safety - Deaths Involving a Law Enforcement Officer - Reports.
- <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2024RS/bills/hb/hb0565f.pdf>
- <https://bja.ojp.gov/funding/performance-measures/DCRA-Reporting-Guidance-FAQs.pdf>
- <https://theappeal.org/death-in-custody-roger-mitchell-jay-aronson/#:~:text=From%20violence%2C%20neglect%2C%20and%20suicide,with%20federally%20mandated%20reporting%20requirements.>
- HB0565-Maryland Deaths In Custody Board - Support (Keel Testimony).
- https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/cmte_testimony/2024/jud/21940_03072024_153645-2.pdf
- <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0565?ys=2024RS#:~:text=Requiring%20the%20Department%20of%20State,31%20each%20year%2C%20to%20report>