

December 16, 2011  
Law and Justice Interim Committee  
Jail Suicide and Arrest Related Deaths Information Overview  
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It is vitally important to keep accurate and complete statistics on the scope and nature of deaths in custody and arrest related deaths. The Montana Board of Crime Control over the last few years has implemented certain programs to respond to this need. In 2011, MBCC began submitting data to the Bureau of Justice Statistics Arrest Related Deaths program. This program is intended to identify those persons who die during the course of arrest. In addition, staff was also directed to keep track of all deaths in custody of local jails and detention centers. Using news accounts and other sources, the MBCC keeps a database of these incidents. For example, in 2011, six persons died in the custody of local jails, 4 committed suicide and 2 died from natural causes.

This data is supplemented by MBCC's Detention Data Information System (DDIS). This program was implemented in 2007 and paid for with federal grant funds. Currently 23 local jails submit data to the system regularly. The DDIS collects booking information on all offenders booked into the contributing agencies local jails. This data can be cross referenced to determine how long a person was in jail before he/she committed suicide, what charges they were being held on, and other parameters. The MBCC acknowledges that the DDIS does not currently collect data from all local jail and detention facilities across the state. However, the infrastructure exists and with additional support, this data can be collected and analyzed on a statewide basis.