

Coronavirus in U.S. jails are public health disaster



New York, April 3 (RHC)-- In the United States, a third prisoner has died of COVID-19 at the Oakdale federal prison in Louisiana. There are confirmed cases in prisons or ICE jails in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Texas, Arkansas, Pennsylvania, California, Nevada, Colorado, Minnesota, Ohio, Kentucky, Maryland, Vermont, New Jersey, and in Illinois, where a 59-year-old prisoner died of COVID-19 at the Stateville prison near Joliet. In Detroit, a Michigan Department of Corrections officer died of COVID-19 on Tuesday, and more than 140 prisoners have tested positive.

In New York City, the top physician at the Rikers Island jail said it's now unlikely officials will be able to halt the spread of COVID-19, predicting 20% of those infected will need hospitalization and 5% will require ventilators. Dr. Ross MacDonald called the situation at Rikers a "public health disaster unfolding before our eyes."

Prisoners report they're packed 50 to a dorm, sleeping 15 inches apart with no access to soap, gloves, sanitizer or bleach.

The United States is the world's largest incarcerator by far, with 2.3 million people behind bars.



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