

# IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Commissioner Hall's Statement on Deaths in Custody**

In response to media inquiries, Mississippi Department of Corrections Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall issues the following statement:

“The Mississippi Department of Corrections takes seriously its constitutional mandate to provide health care to all individuals in its custody. All deaths are investigated to determine whether foul play is involved. If foul play is determined, the cases are referred to the appropriate authorities.

The number of deaths the department is reporting is not out of line with the number of deaths in previous months. However, the department appreciates the concern from the public and remains committed to transparency. As such, the department has been the first source to make certain information about deaths available to the general public.

Based on current information available, the department believes that a majority of the deaths are from natural causes in that they include cancer, coronary, and other medical conditions. The incarcerated 19,000-plus individuals tend to mirror the free world in that people from all walks of life and with all types of pre-existing conditions enter the prison system daily. Recognizing that, the MDOC is committed to ensuring that all individuals entrusted to its care receive appropriate medical care.”