




Date: February 28, 2019  
To: Representative John Considine  
From: Judy Randall, Deputy Legislative Auditor   
Subject: State Corrections Workers Age at Death, 2010 to 2018 – Follow-up Information

You asked the Office of the Legislative Auditor to examine age at death of corrections officers in state prisons. This memo provides a follow-up to our previous response on February 8, 2019.

To answer your question, we obtained data from the Minnesota State Retirement System (MSRS) on individuals eligible to receive benefits through the MSRS Correctional Plan. This plan is available to correctional officers and certain other employees within the departments of Corrections and Human Services. To be eligible for this plan, individuals must spend at least 75 percent of their time providing direct care to patients or inmates.<sup>1</sup>

The MSRS data included information on all beneficiaries who died that participated in the MSRS Correctional Plan. We examined MSRS data between 2010 and 2018. A total of 371 individuals died while eligible for this plan during this time period. For those individuals who were eligible or receiving benefits, the median age at death during this time period was 70.0 years old, with the youngest person being 33 years old at the time of death and the oldest person being 101 years old at the time of death. Exhibit 1.1 provides the median age at death for MSRS Correctional Plan beneficiaries each year from 2010 through 2018.

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### Exhibit 1.1: Among MSRS Correctional Plan Beneficiaries who died between 2010 and 2018, half died at age 70 or older.

<u>Calendar Year (number of deaths)</u>	<u>Median Age at Death (years)</u>
2010 ( <i>n</i> = 28)	66.5
2011 ( <i>n</i> = 40)	71.5
2012 ( <i>n</i> = 46)	69.0
2013 ( <i>n</i> = 30)	66.0
2014 ( <i>n</i> = 45)	70.0
2015 ( <i>n</i> = 42)	74.0
2016 ( <i>n</i> = 48)	74.5
2017 ( <i>n</i> = 38)	69.0
2018 ( <i>n</i> = 54)	72.0
2010 – 2018 ( <i>n</i> = 371)	70.0

SOURCE: Office of the Legislative Auditor, analysis of Minnesota State Retirement System data.

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<sup>1</sup> *Minnesota Statutes* 2018, 352.91.

Based on their last recorded position, we categorized beneficiaries as corrections officers or non-corrections officers. These positions are outlined in *Minnesota Statutes* 2018, 352.91, subd. 1. Positions classified as corrections officers include corrections officer 1, corrections officer 2, corrections officer 3, corrections captain, corrections supervisor, corrections lieutenant, security counselor, and security counselor lead.<sup>2</sup>

However, the MSRS data did not include job position information for 74 of the 371 beneficiaries (approximately 20 percent) who died from 2010 through 2018.

The missing data limits our ability to accurately calculate beneficiaries' median age at death by position. Exhibit 1.2 illustrates the sensitivity of our results to these missing data. We present this information to demonstrate why determining an exact age at death for beneficiaries is inconclusive.

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**Exhibit 1.2: Due to missing data, no conclusions can be drawn about the relative longevity of corrections officers compared with non-corrections officers.**

	Median Age at Death, Assuming All Individuals with a Missing Job Position are Corrections Officers (yrs)	Median Age at Death, Assuming All Individuals with a Missing Job Position are Non-corrections Officers (yrs)
Corrections Officers	71.0	67.0
Non-corrections Officers	70.0	78.0

NOTES: The analysis is based on median age at death for beneficiaries who have a recorded job classification at the time of death from 2010 through 2018 and for the 74 beneficiaries with missing job position information who died in those same years. Including all 74 beneficiaries with missing job positions into each column demonstrates why the results are inconclusive. That is, corrections officers may have a median age at death that is as much as 1 year greater than non-corrections officers; alternatively, corrections officers may have a median age at death that is as much as 11 years lower than non-corrections officers. Corrections officers include all beneficiaries with positions outlined in *Minnesota Statutes* 2018, 352.91, subd. 1 (corrections officer 1, corrections officer 2, corrections officer 3, corrections captain, corrections supervisor, corrections lieutenant, security counselor, and security counselor lead). Non-corrections officers include all other positions in the MSRS Correctional Plan system.

SOURCE: Office of the Legislative Auditor, analysis of Minnesota State Retirement System data.

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<sup>2</sup> *Minnesota Statutes* 2018, 352.91, subsd. 1-2a, and 3c-3g. Non-corrections officers include clinical program therapists, recreation therapists, work therapists, special teachers, behavior analysts, nurses, and others.