

COVID-19 Survey: Report on Initial Results of Surveys Collected from People Incarcerated in IDOC Prisons

The John Howard Association (JHA) is an independent citizen correctional oversight organization that goes into prisons to monitor conditions of confinement and treatment of people who are incarcerated; we fight for a fair and humane system and for government transparency and accountability. For 119 years we have been the eyes and ears of the public inside Illinois' prisons, reporting what we see, hear and learn inside facilities and using this information to recommend policy and practice changes and advocate for system reform.

Correctional settings are unable to put in place many of the protective factors recommended by health experts due to physical plant, resource and operational constraints. It is critical that we know and understand how people in prison are experiencing the COVID-19 health crisis and what the government must do to meet the health needs of people in prison.

During this unprecedented time and circumstances, JHA launched a special system-wide COVID-19 survey to enable us to hear directly from those who are in prisons about what is being done, how they are being treated, if announced plans and protocols are being implemented, and what their actual lived experiences have been. JHA also launched an online survey for people who work in prisons to gather their perspectives. Taken together with information from people who are administrators at prisons, this totality of information will convey the views of the people who are most directly impacted and JHA will continue to use this as a basis for recommendations to improve the response of the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC), in order to improve and possibly save lives.

The survey data contained in this report sheds light on how the COVID-19 pandemic is actually being handled inside prisons and impacting people who are incarcerated. It is critical that we know and understand what IDOC has done to minimize exposure, reduce contagion and isolate and treat those who have been infected. Without this information it is very difficult to hold the Agency accountable for implementation of policies that affect the lives in its custody. Furthermore, it is critical that we assess what is happening both system wide and in individual facilities. Illinois prisons often operate as individual units, varying in the interpretation and implementation of Agency wide policy, thus creating a lack of consistency and uniformity. This is problematic under ordinary circumstances, but more so during times of crisis.

JHA's survey results not only provide a unique understanding about the impact of the current pandemic within IDOC, but also provide information useful for the better management of this and future health crises that carceral settings will inevitably face. Of the utmost importance, the information from JHA's surveys will bring the actual experiences of people who live and work in prisons into the conversation to be used to improve and advocate for the health and safety of all impacted people. This report of data from surveys received from people who are incarcerated is the first product of this initiative. We will be sharing more information from this singular undertaking in the coming weeks and months.

Contents:

Section 1: Description of Sample by Prison	3
Section 2: Aggregate Results of COVID-19 Surveys Collected from People Incarcerated at the Twenty-Eight Prisons Included in the Sample ⁱ	4
Section 3: Survey Response by Prison Comparison Charts	9
Endnotes	16

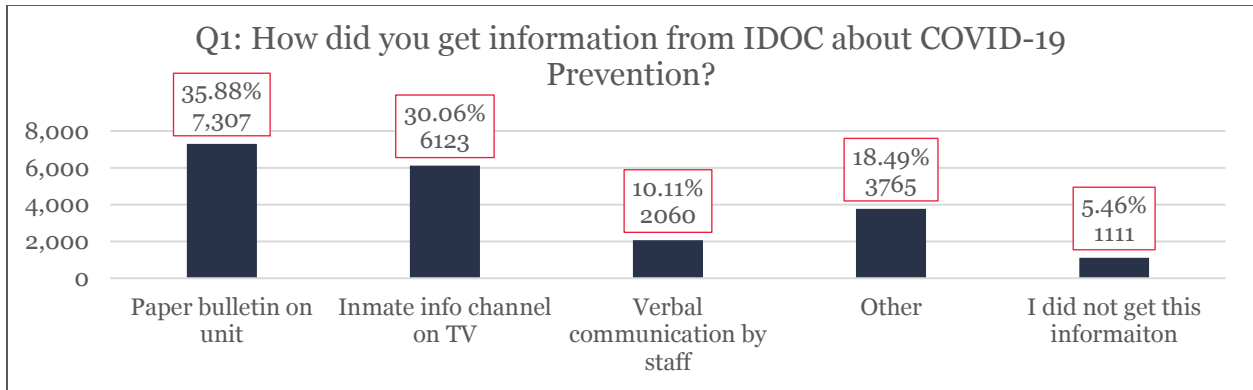
Section 1: Description of Sample by Prison

The survey results reported herein are based on a sample of 16,236ⁱⁱ surveys completed between April 24th and May 20th 2020.ⁱⁱⁱ A COVID-19 Survey, informed consent notice/instruction sheet, and a business reply envelope addressed to JHA was provided to everyone imprisoned at each of the twenty-eight IDOC prisons listed in the table below.^{iv} The business reply envelope addressed to JHA allowed people the opportunity to participate in the COVID-19 survey anonymously and free of charge.

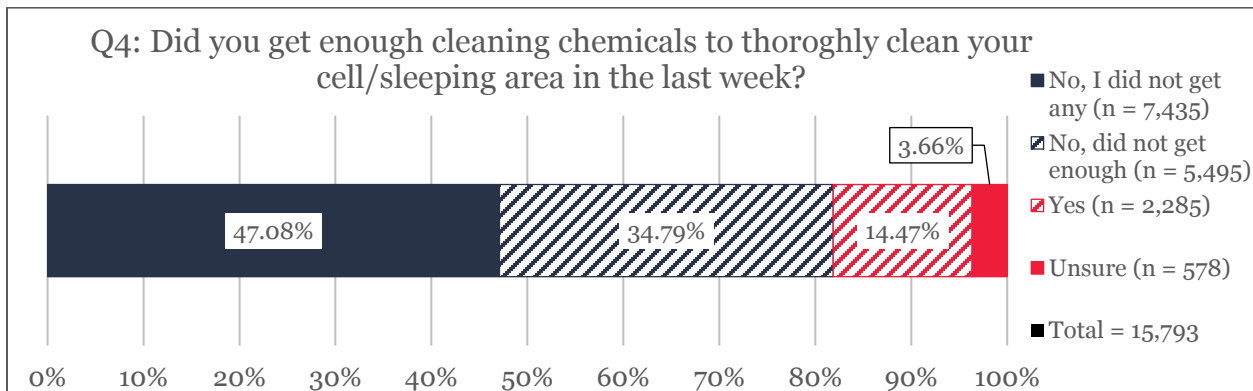
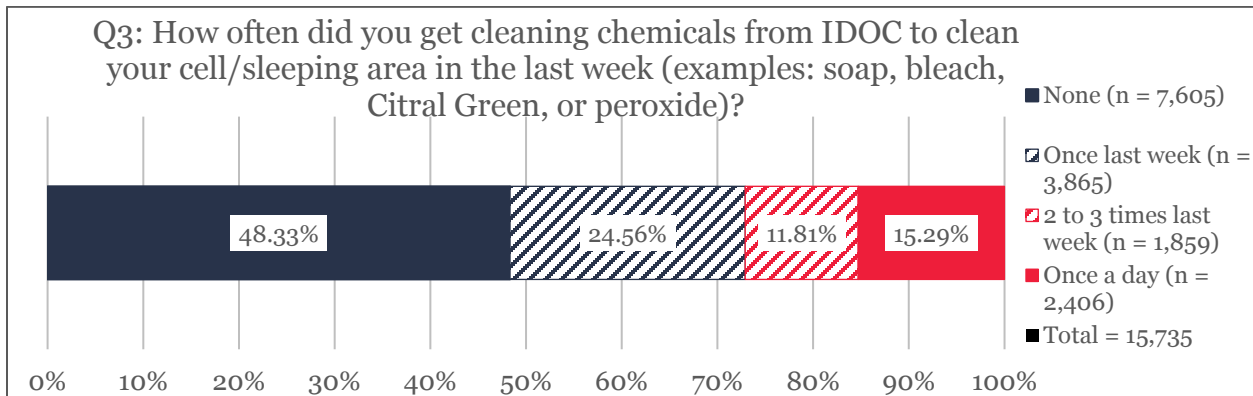
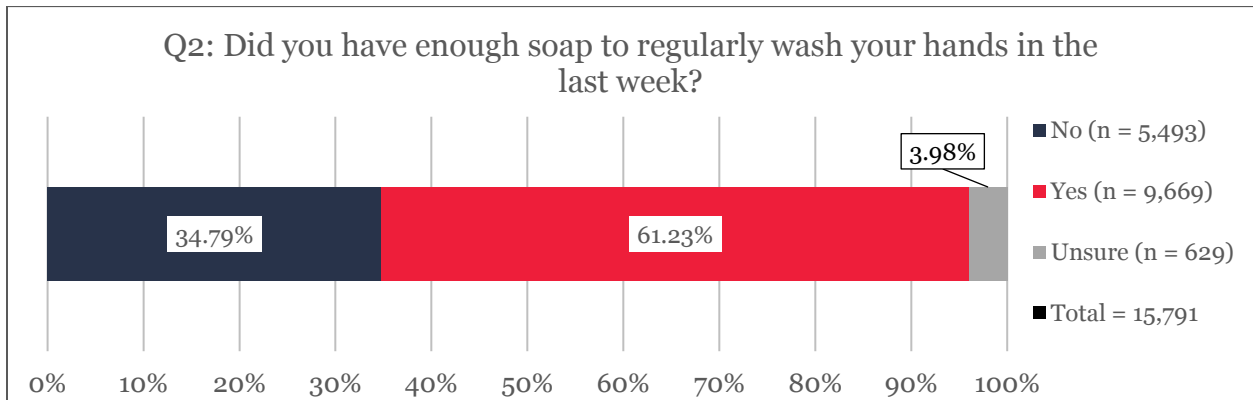
Everyone who completed a survey were encouraged to provide open-ended comments to JHA when they mailed in the survey. JHA is currently processing these comments and will report on the key findings derived from the comments at a later date. JHA will read all surveys and comments, regardless of when they are received.

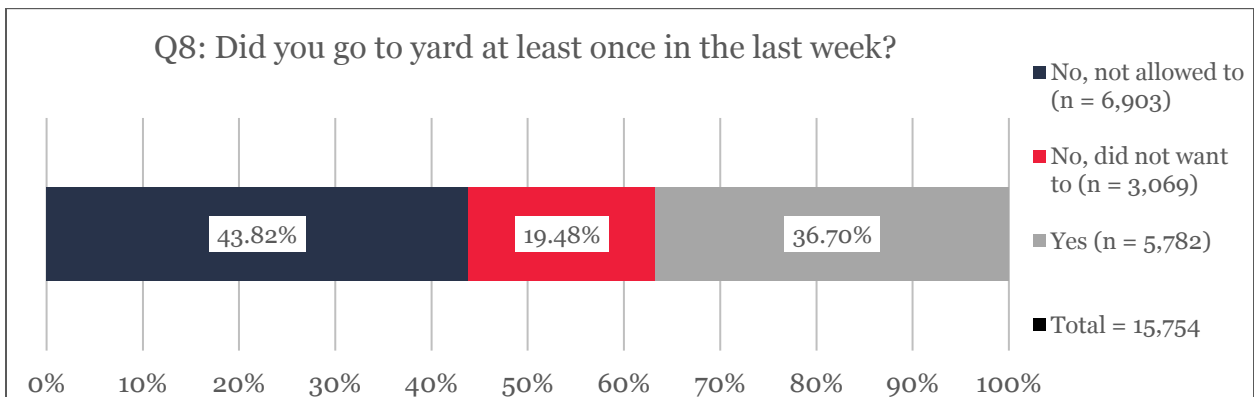
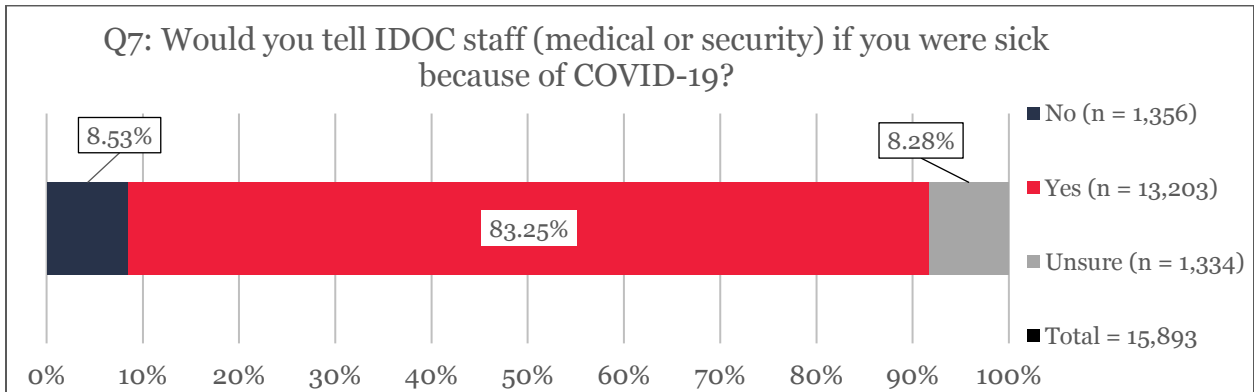
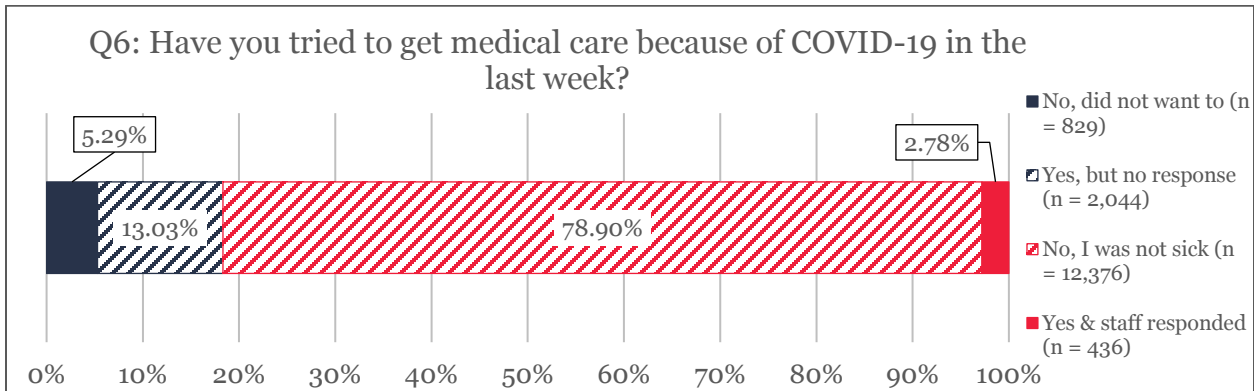
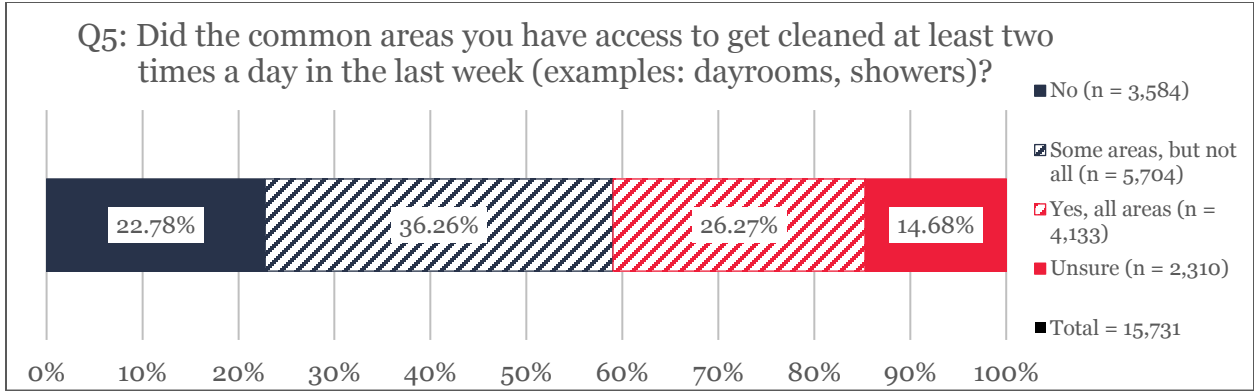
Prison	Population^v of people in each prison	Surveys Collected	Percentage of People Who Responded
Big Muddy	1,149	698	60.75%
Centralia	1,209	554	45.82%
Danville	1,541	850	55.16%
Decatur	381	231	60.63%
East Moline	1,055	490	46.45%
Graham	1,788	903	50.50%
Hill	1,557	629	40.40%
Illinois River	1,546	791	51.16%
Jacksonville ^{vi}	963	601	62.41%
Joliet	196	58	29.59%
Kewanee	248	82	33.06%
Lawrence	1,936	871	44.99%
Lincoln	893	404	45.24%
Logan	1,478	1019	68.94%
Menard ^{vii}	2,171	1023	47.12%
Pinckneyville	1,817	727	40.01%
Pontiac ^{viii}	1,155	522	45.19%
Robinson	986	489	49.59%
Shawnee	1,471	450	30.59%
Sheridan	1,579	1003	63.52%
Southwestern	555	345	62.16%
Stateville	1,138	556	48.86%
Taylorville	955	467	48.90%
Vandalia	829	332	40.05%
Vienna	818	389	47.56%
Western	1,575	776	49.27%
Dixon ^{ix}	2,145	934	43.54%
Murphysboro	156	42	26.92%
Totals:	33,290	16,236	48.77%

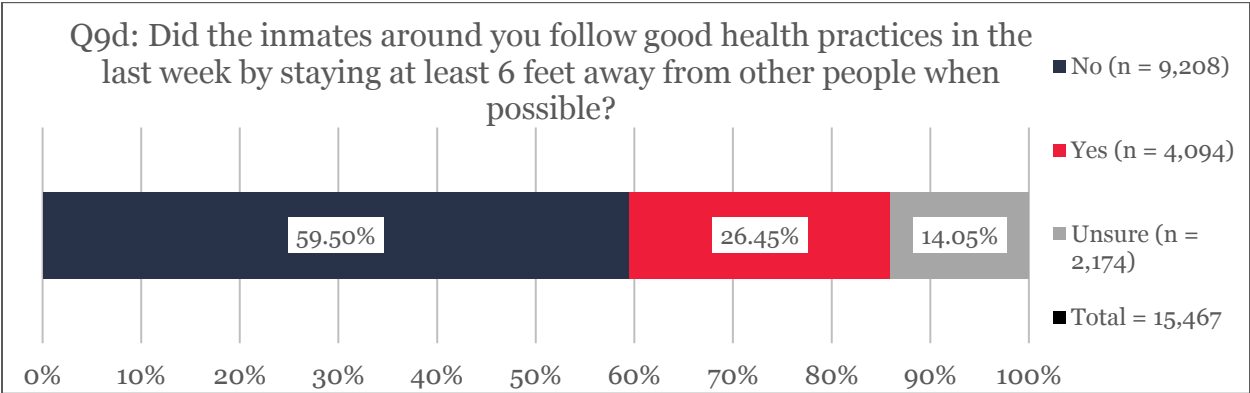
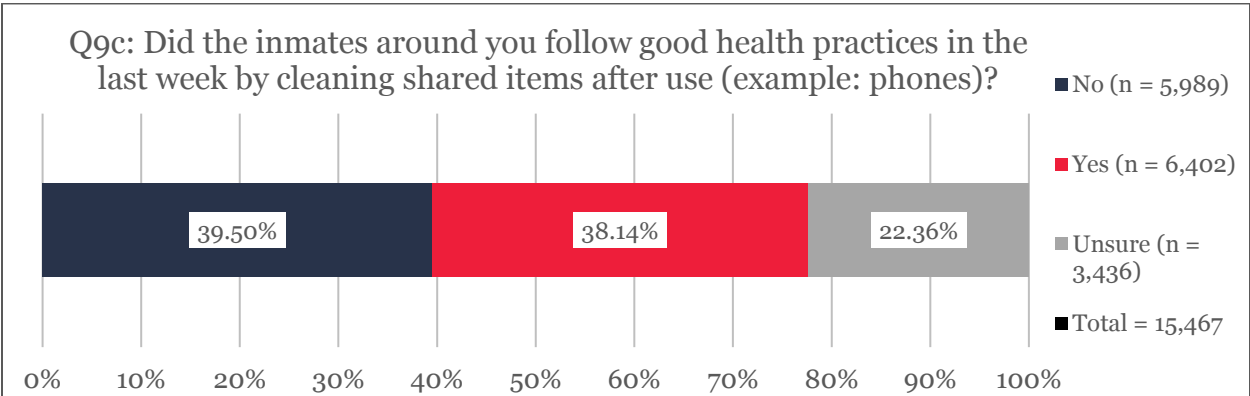
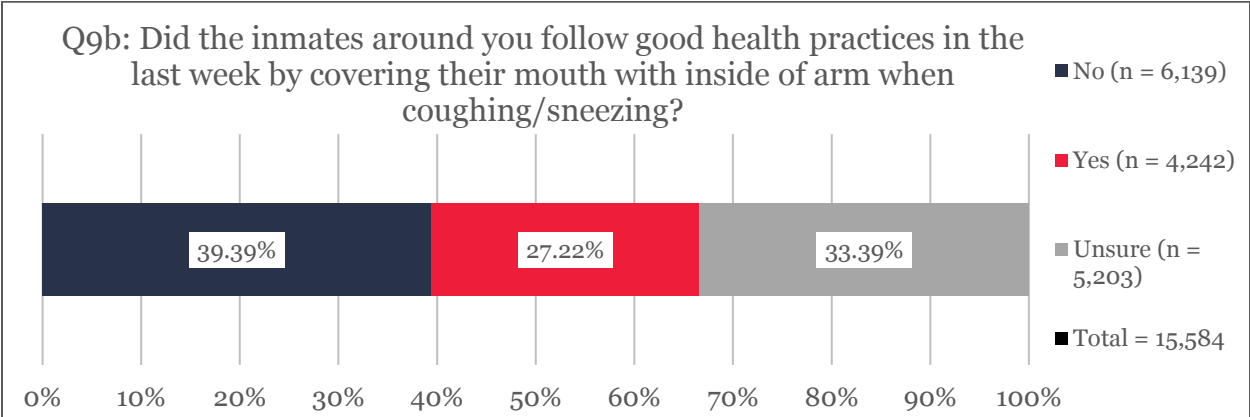
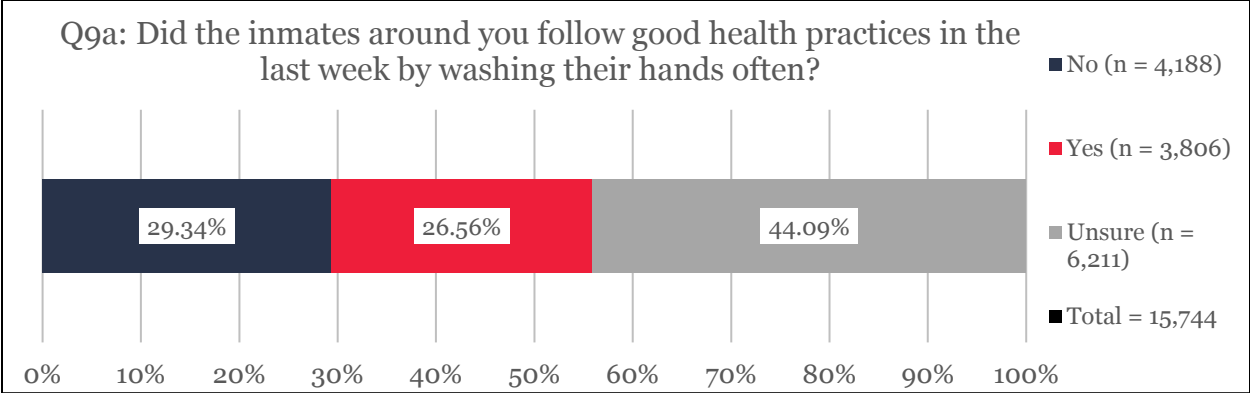
Section 2: Aggregate Results of COVID-19 Surveys Collected from People Incarcerated at the Twenty-Eight Prisons Included in the Sample

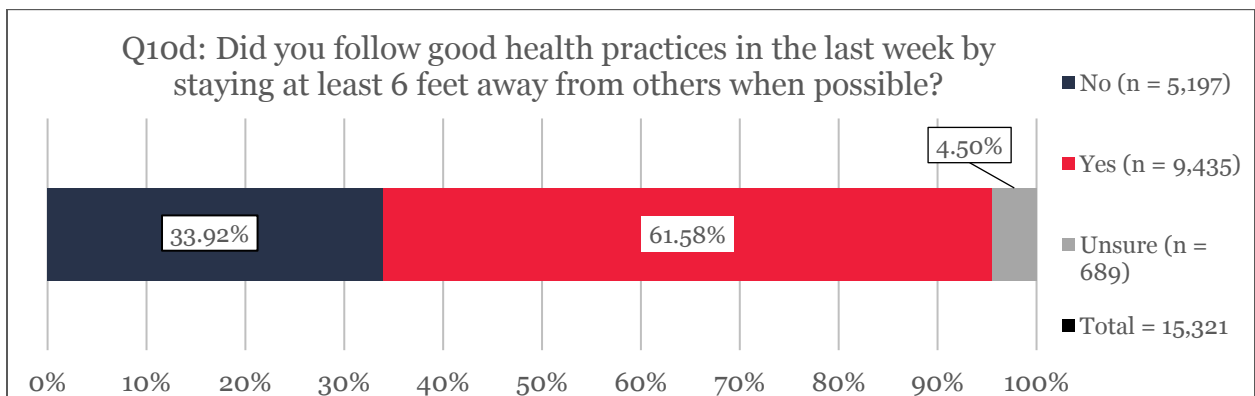
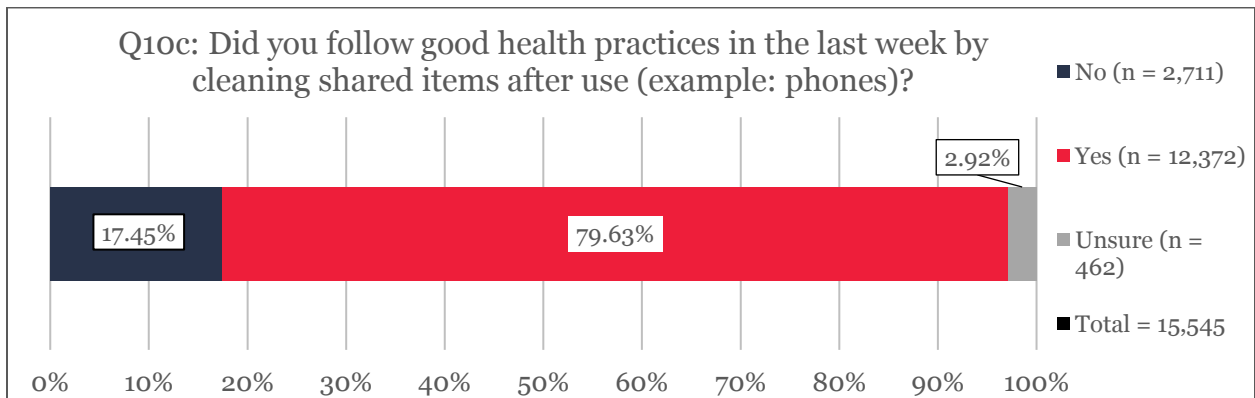
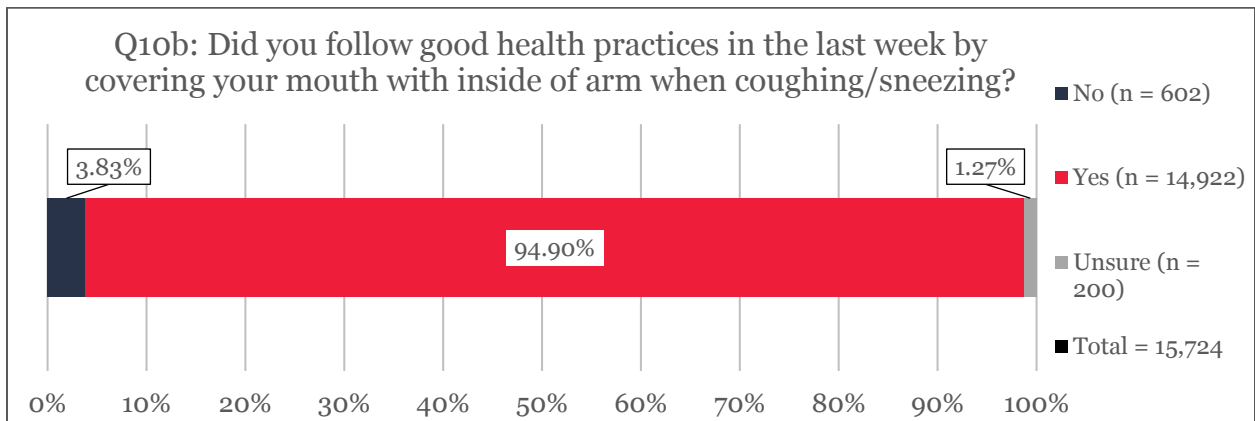
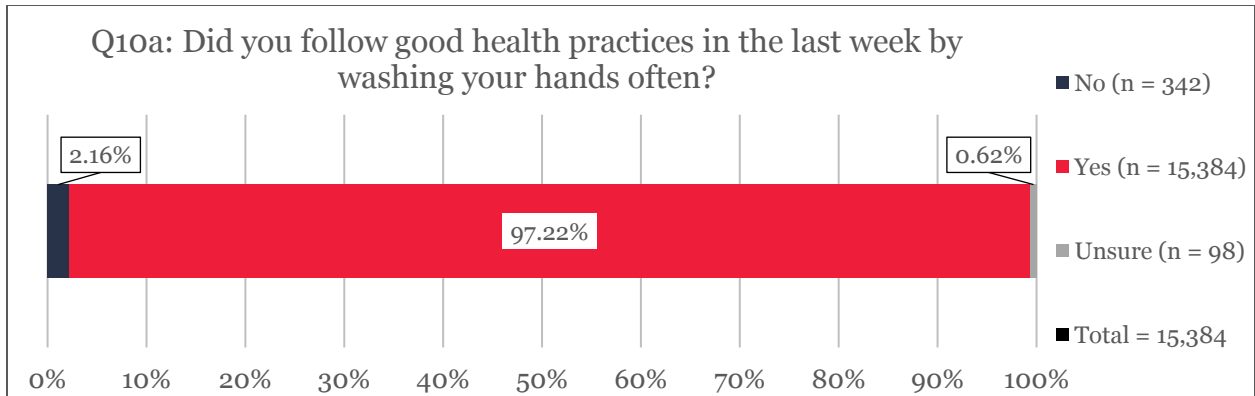


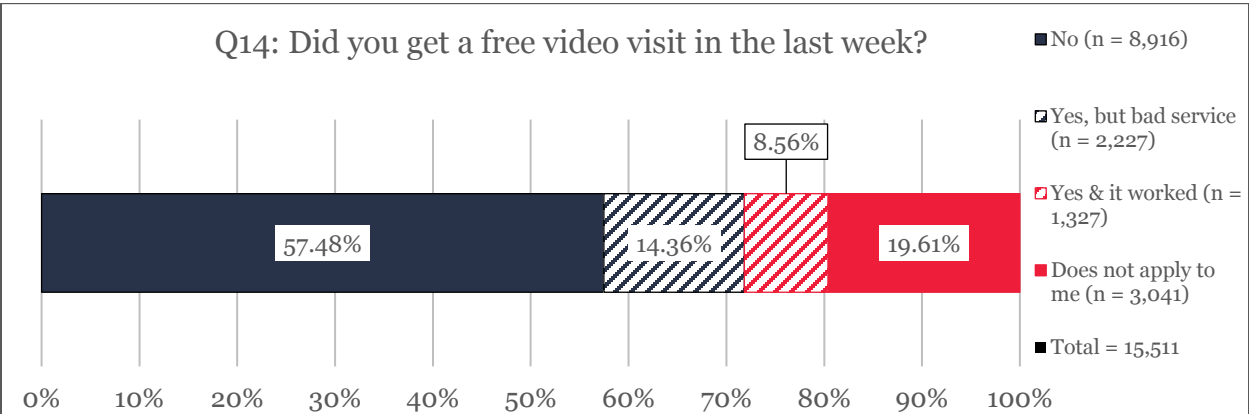
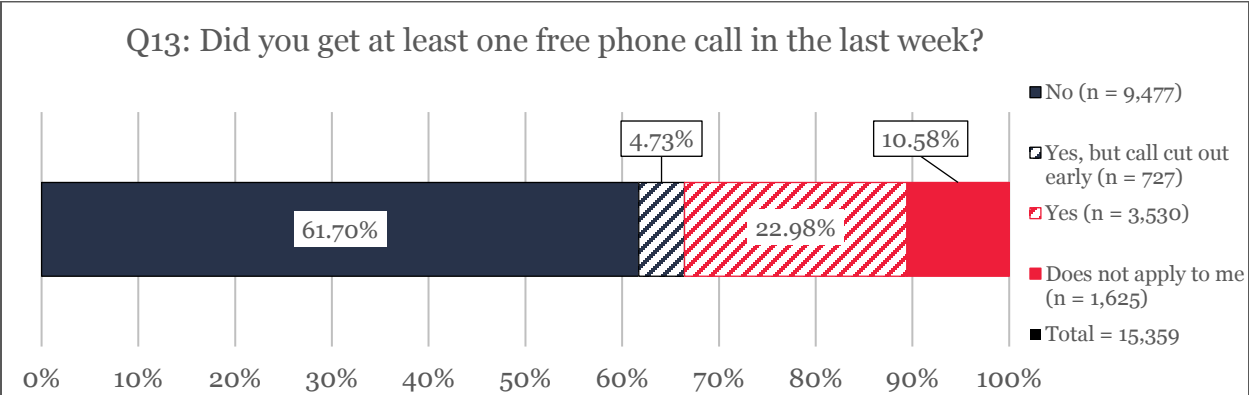
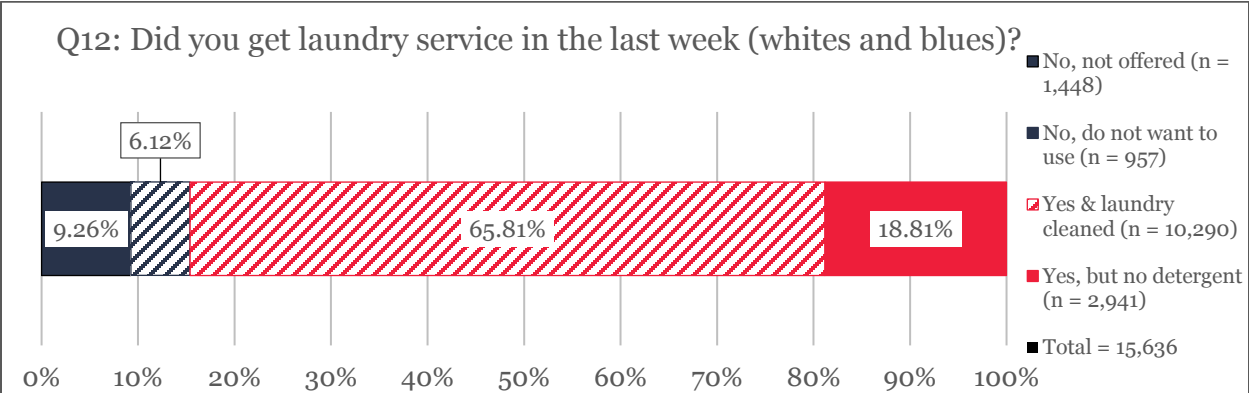
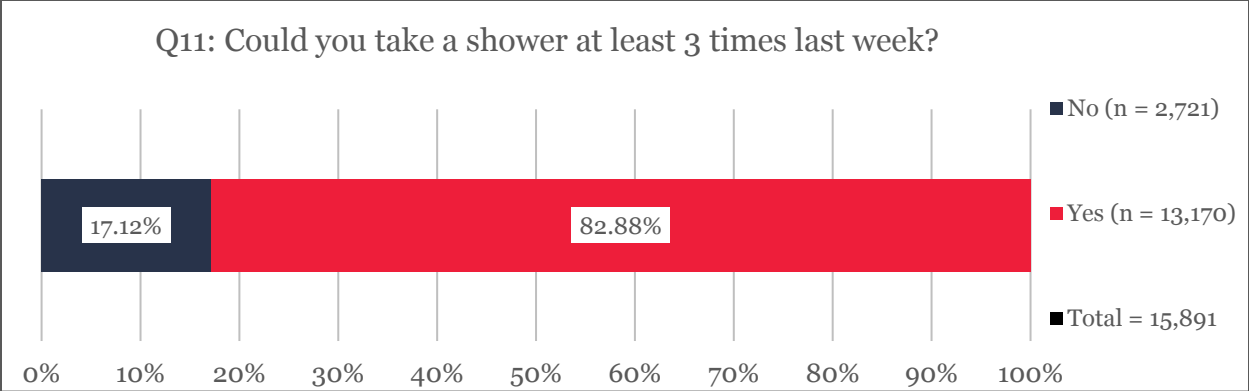
- Percentages total to over 100% in table above because multiple answers could be selected

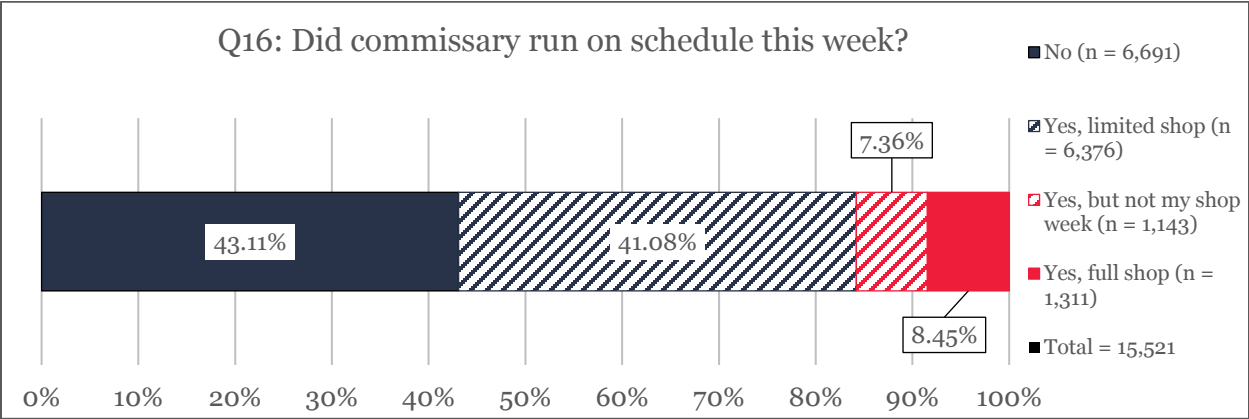
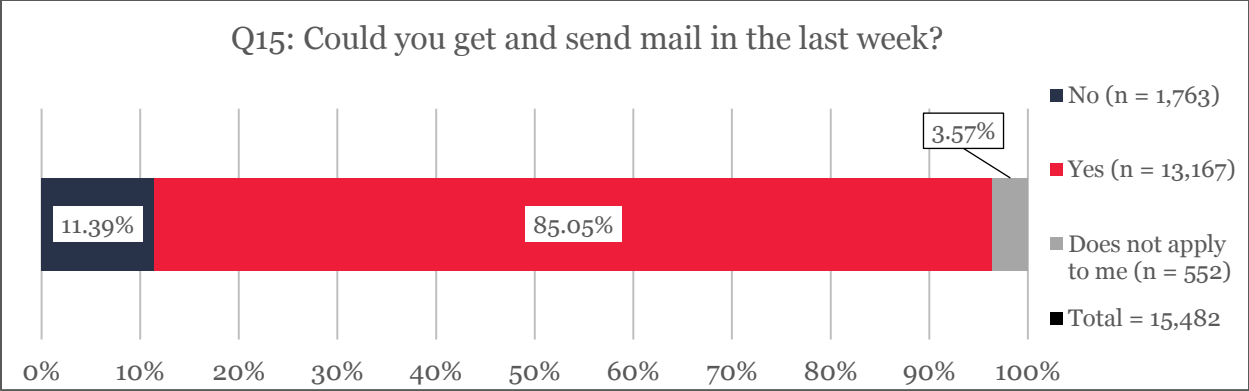






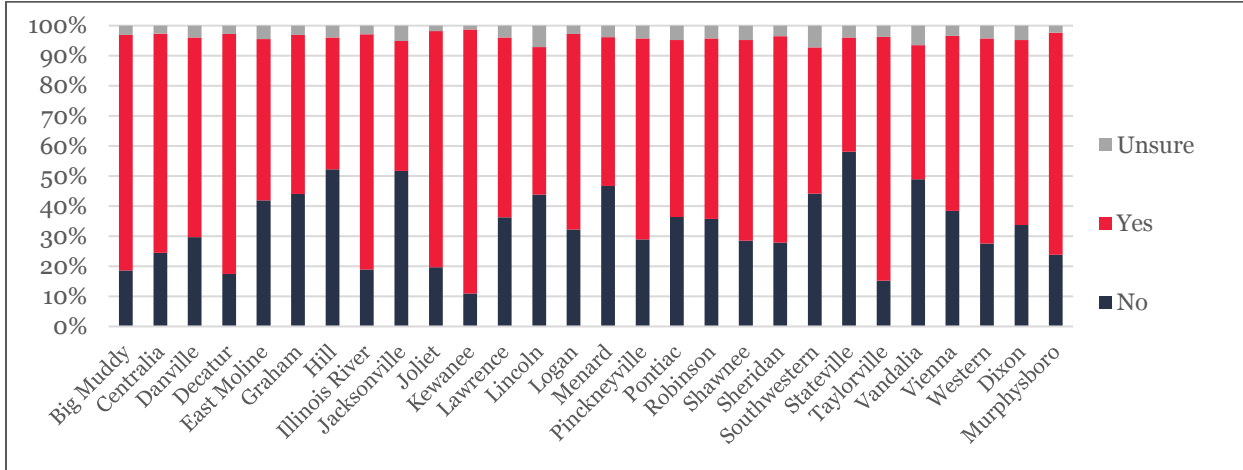




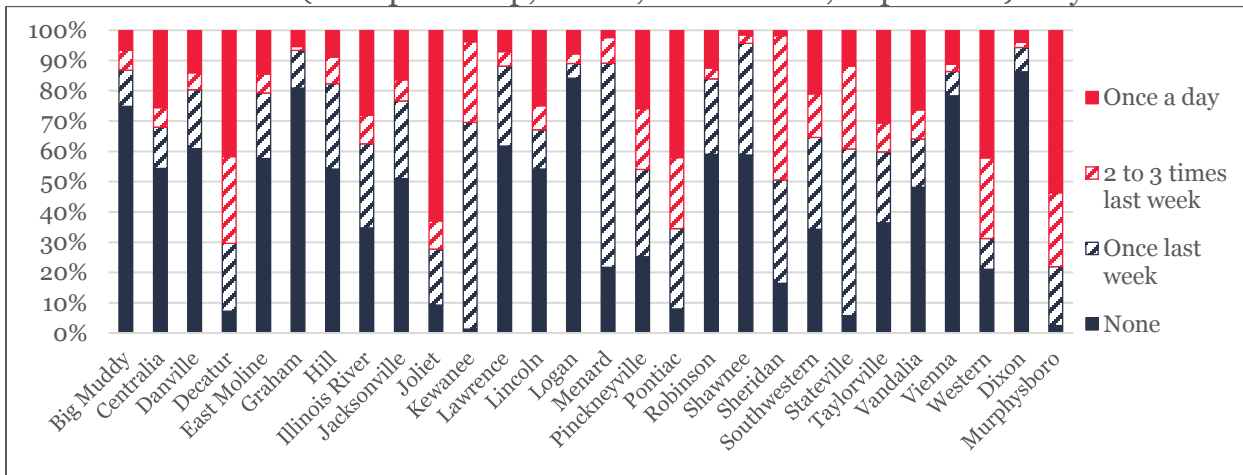


Section 3: Survey Response by Prison Comparison Charts

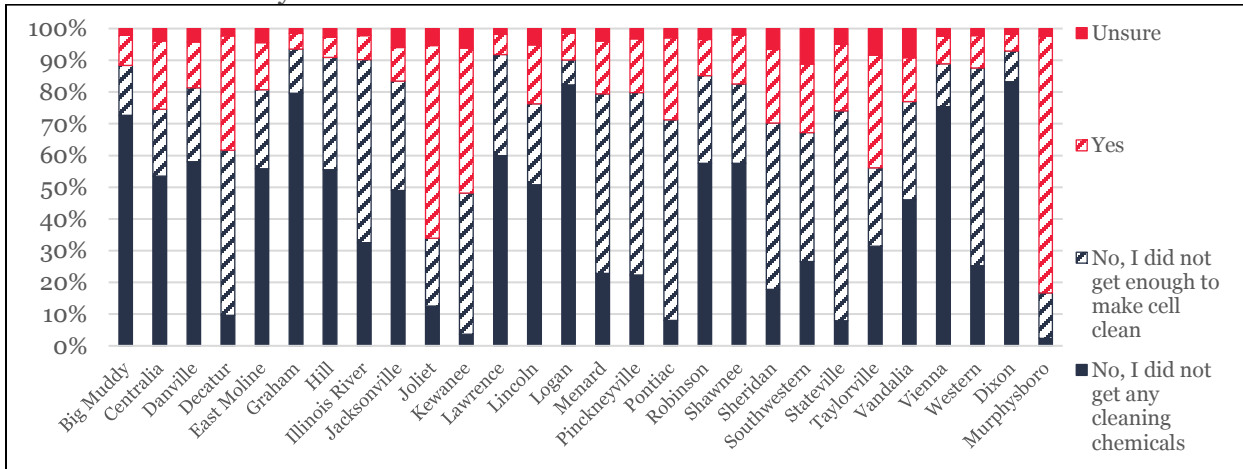
Q2: “Did you have enough soap to regularly wash your hands in the last week?” by Prison



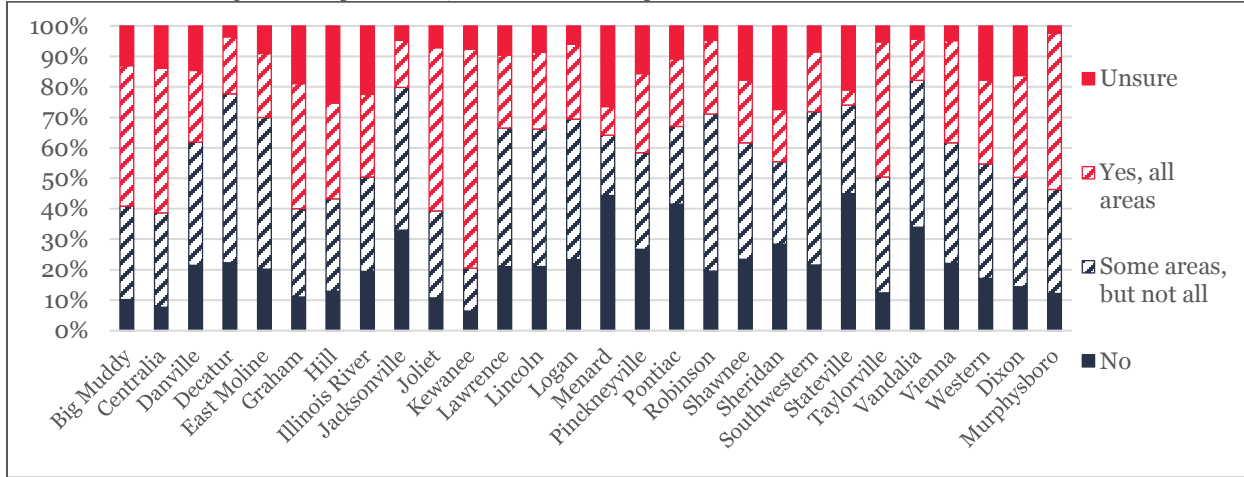
Q3: “How often did you get cleaning chemicals from IDOC to clean your cell/sleeping area in the last week (examples: soap, bleach, Citral Green, or peroxide)?” by Prison



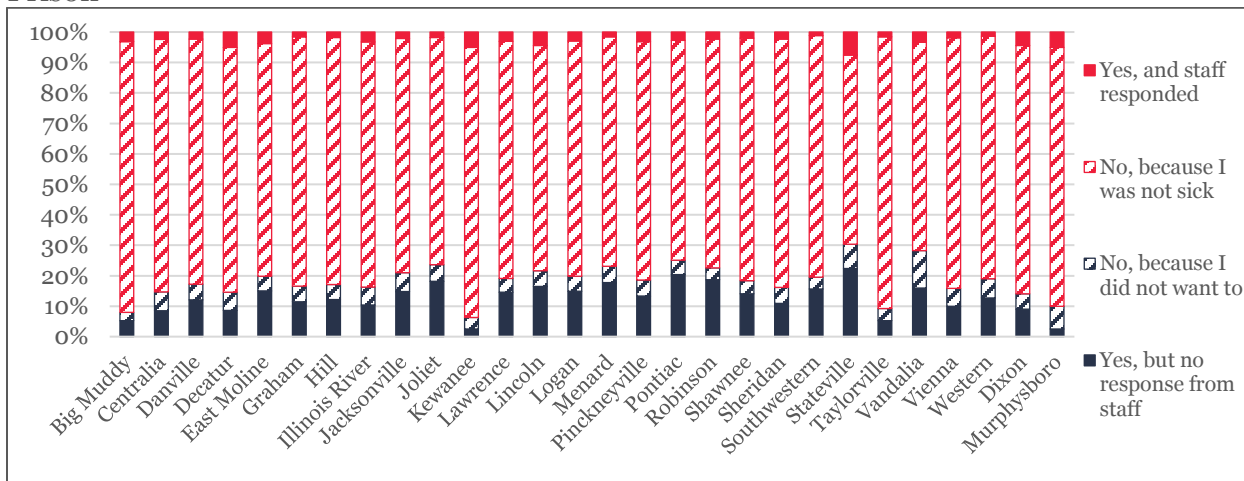
Q4: “Did you get enough cleaning chemicals to thoroughly clean your cell/sleeping area in the last week?” by Prison



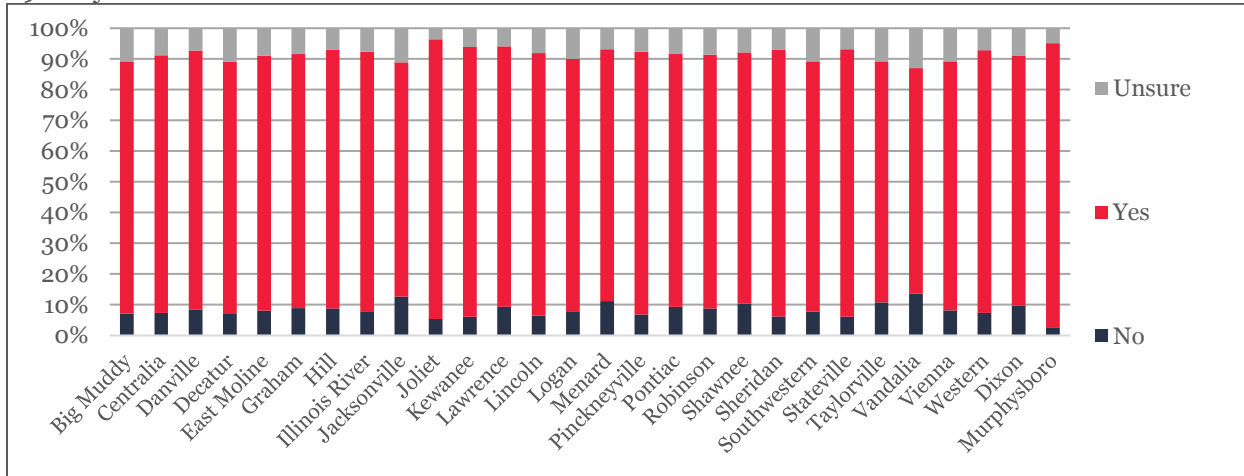
Q5: “Did the common areas you have access to get cleaned at least two times a day in the last week (examples: dayrooms, showers)?” by Prison



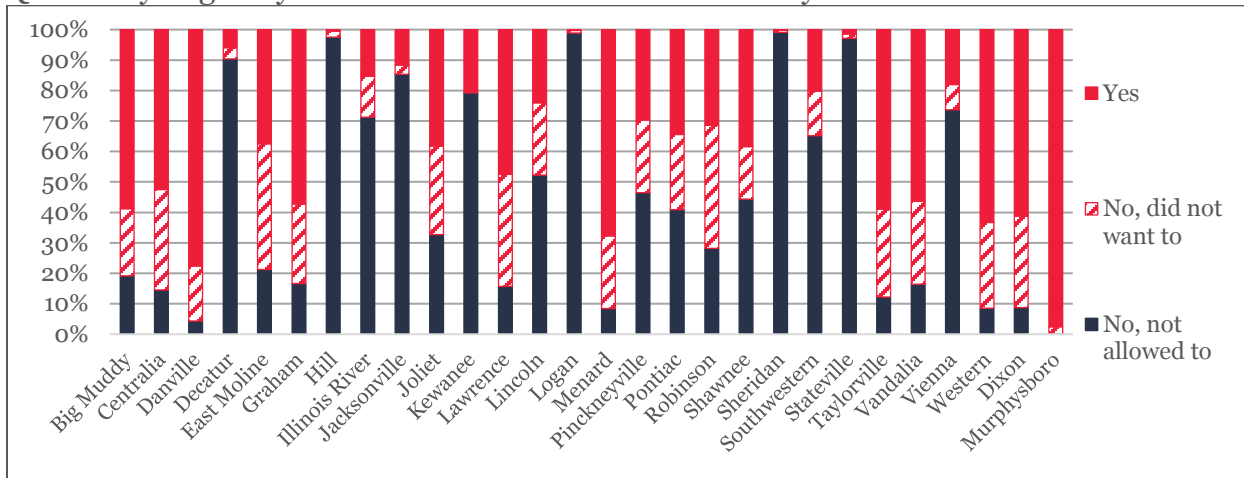
Q6: “Have you tried to get medical care because of COVID-19 in the last week?” by Prison



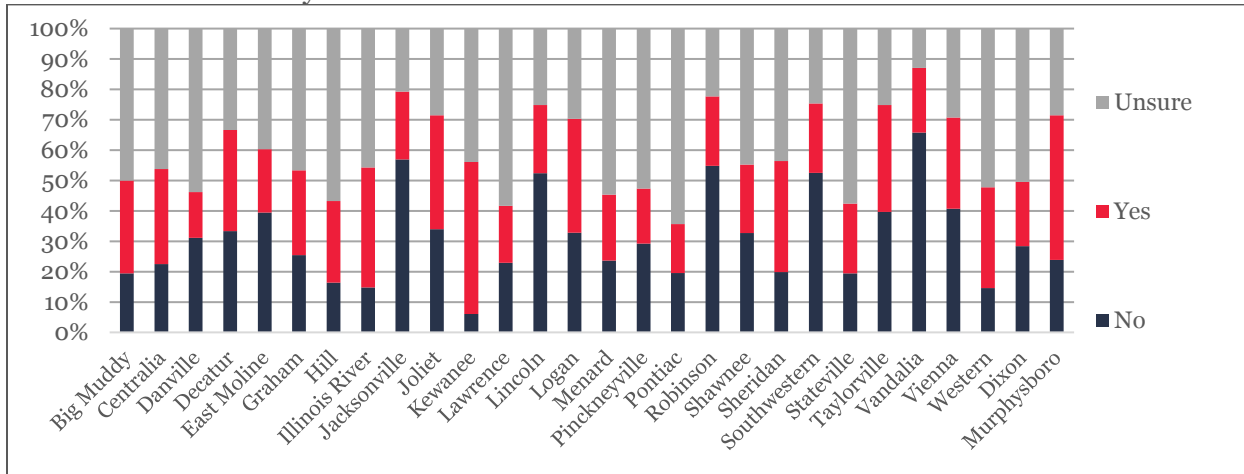
Q7: “Would you tell IDOC staff (medical or security) if you were sick because of COVID-19?” by Prison



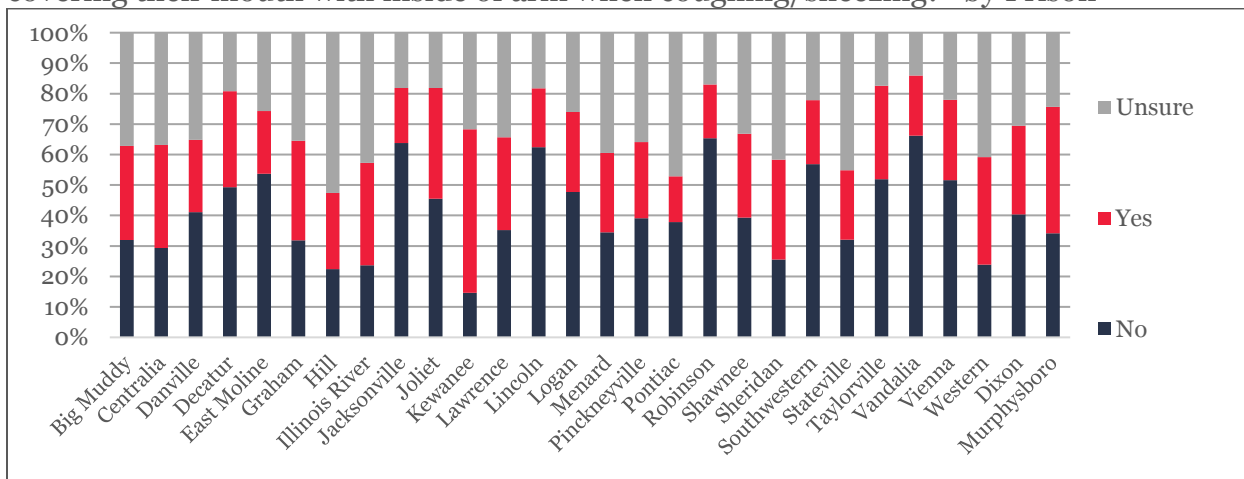
Q8: “Did you go to yard at least once in the last week?” by Prison



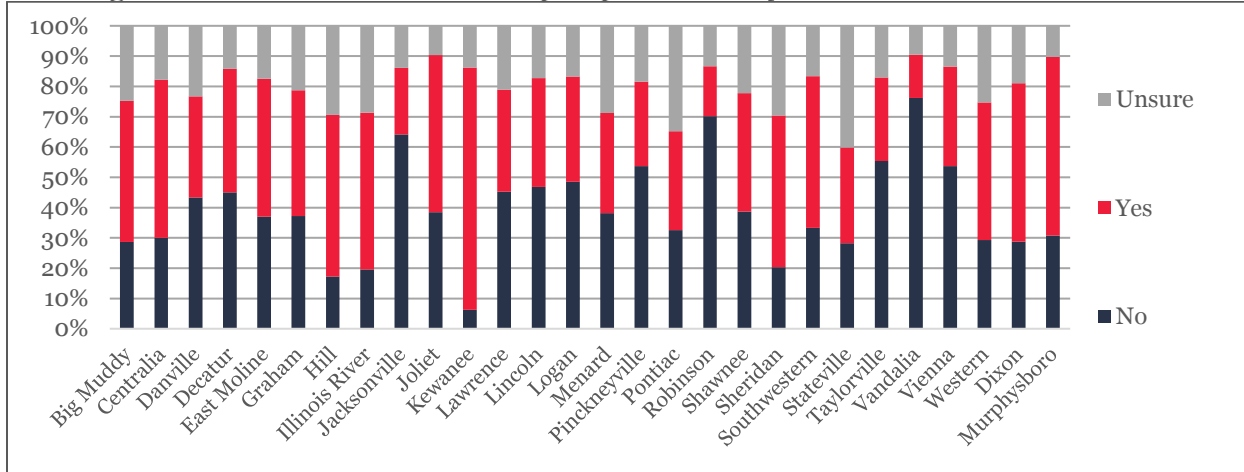
Q9a: “Did the inmates around you follow good health practices last week by washing their hands often?” by Prison



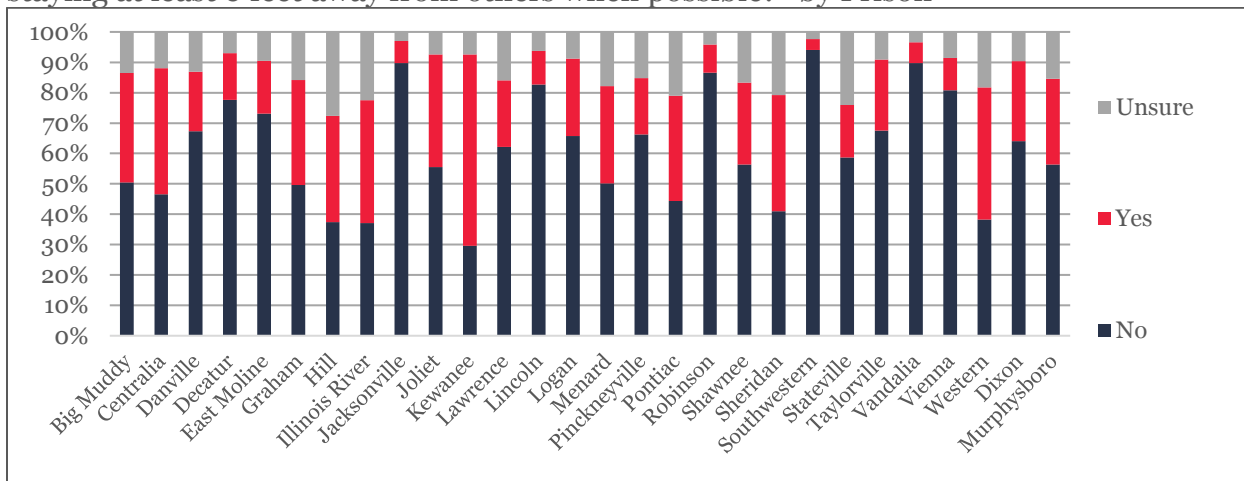
Q9b: “Did the inmates around you follow good health practices in the last week by covering their mouth with inside of arm when coughing/sneezing?” by Prison



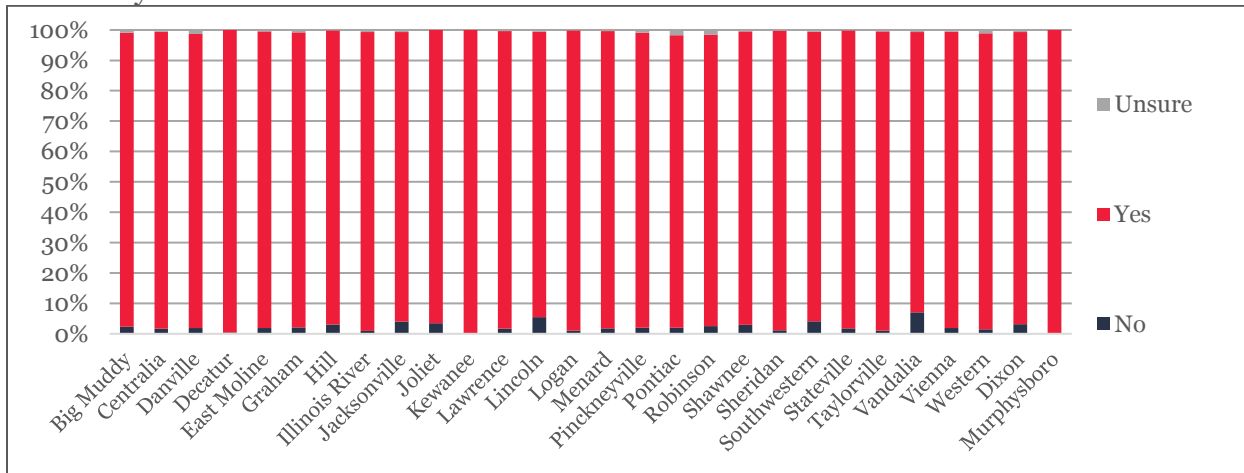
Q9c: “Did the inmates around you follow good health practices in the last week by cleaning shared items after use (example: phones)?” by Prison



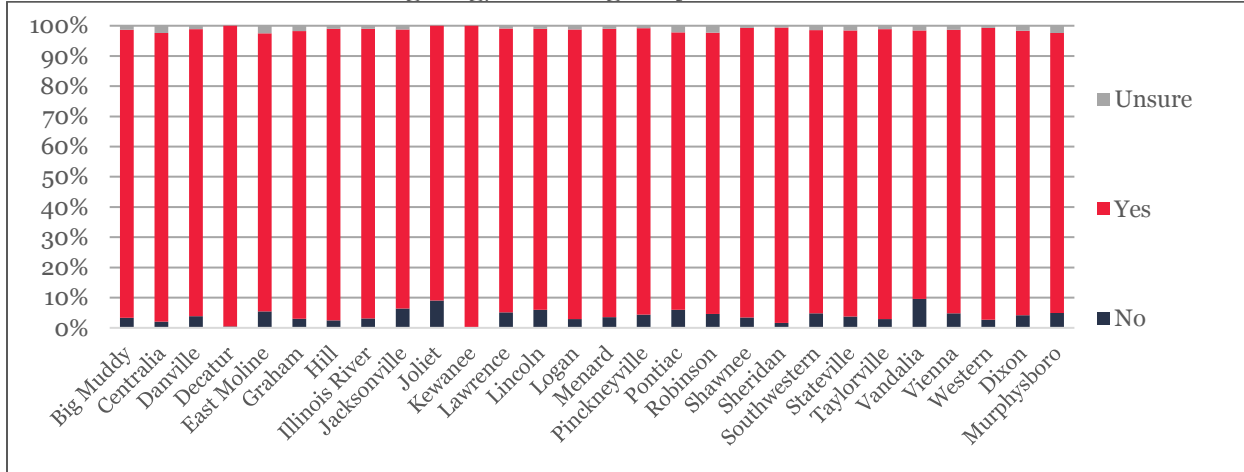
Q9d: “Did the inmates around you follow good health practices in the last week by staying at least 6 feet away from others when possible?” by Prison



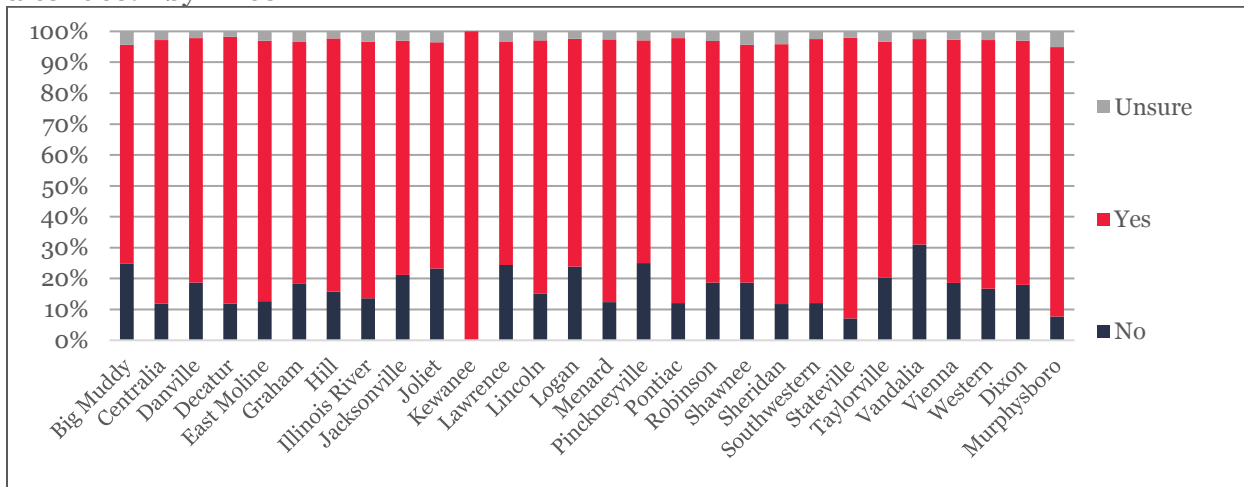
Q10a: “Did you follow good health practices in the last week by washing your hands often?” by Prison



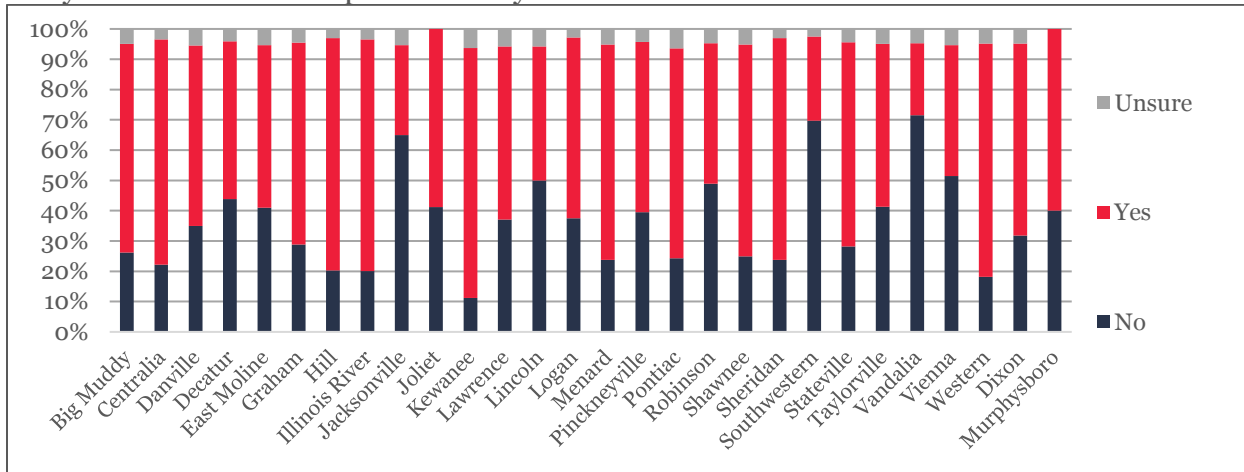
Q10b: “Did you follow good health practices in the last week by covering your mouth with inside of arm when coughing/sneezing?” by Prison



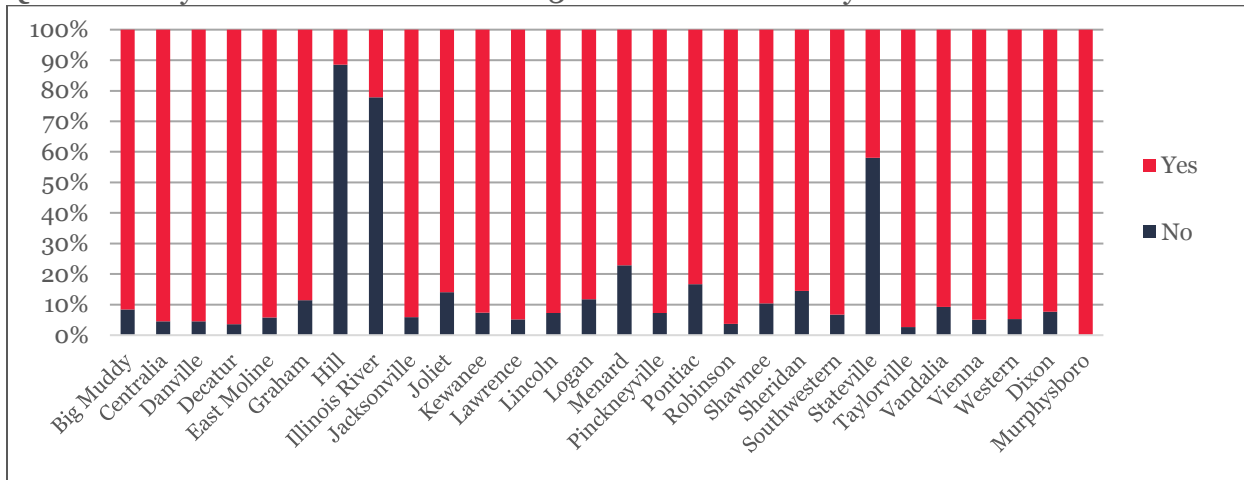
Q10c: “Did you follow good health practices in the last week by cleaning shared items after use?” by Prison



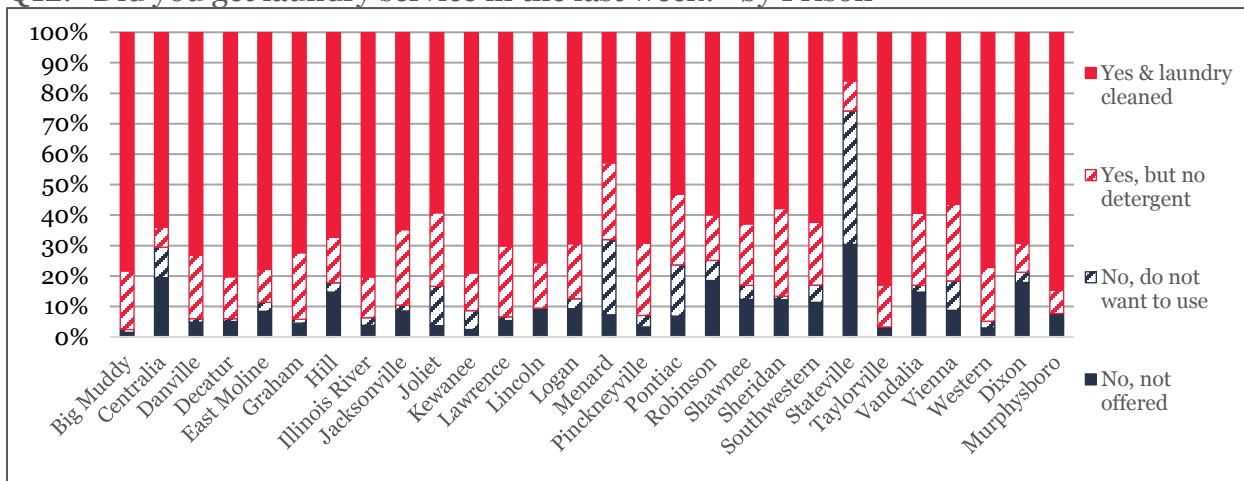
Q10d: “Did you follow good health practices in the last week by staying at least 6 feet away from others when possible?” by Prison



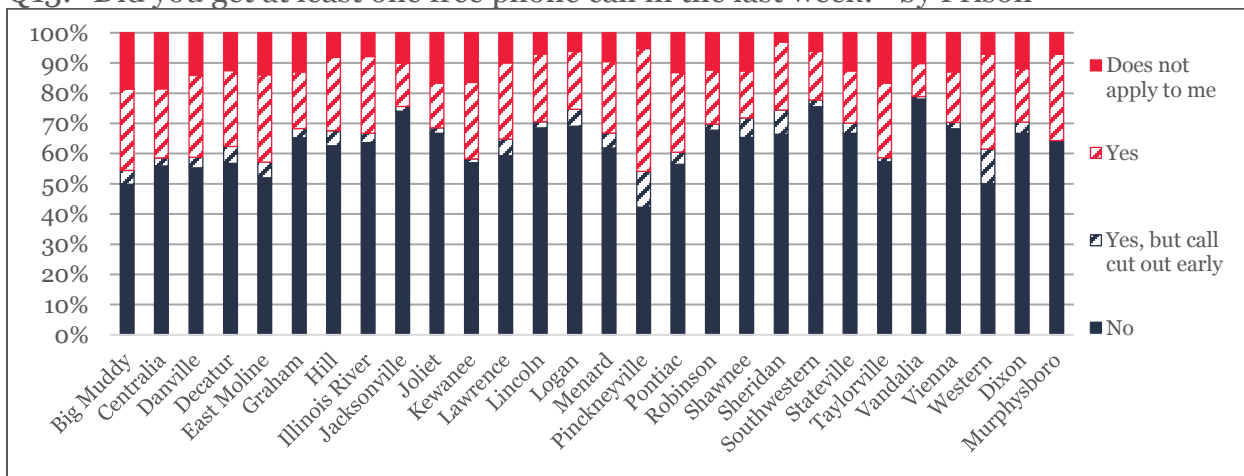
Q11: "Could you take a shower at least 3 times last week?" by Prison



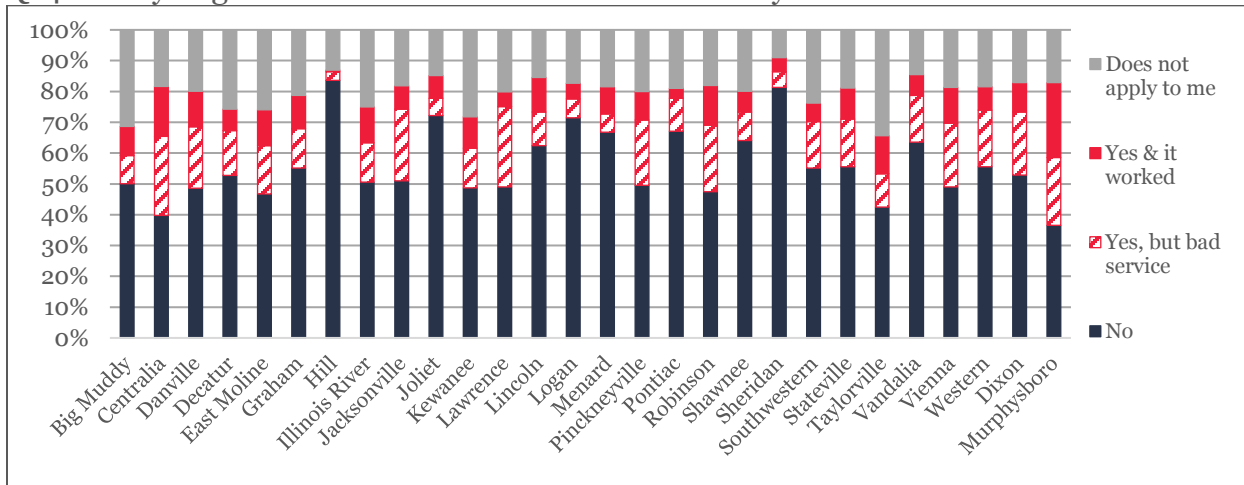
Q12: "Did you get laundry service in the last week?" by Prison



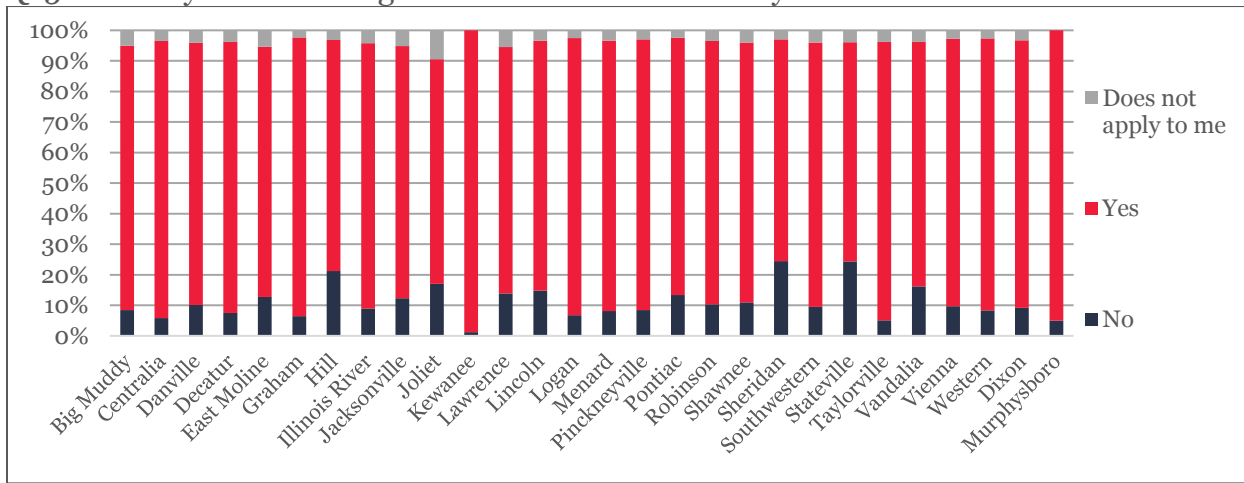
Q13: "Did you get at least one free phone call in the last week?" by Prison



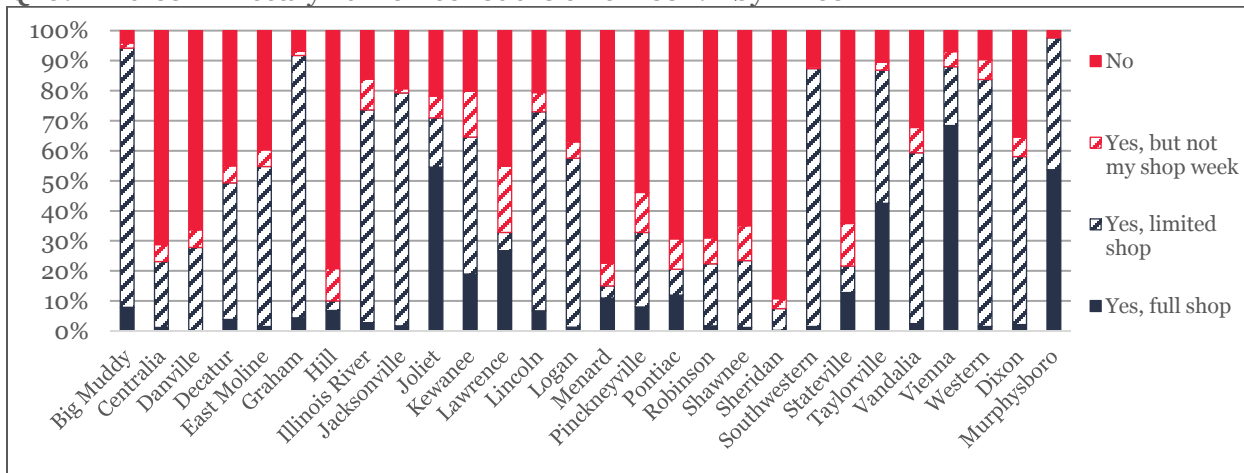
Q14: "Did you get a free video visit in the last week?" by Prison



Q15: "Could you send and get mail in the last week?" by Prison



Q16: "Did commissary run on schedule this week?" by Prison



Endnotes:

i The reported survey responses to the survey items in section two are comprised of raw results. No statistical weighting procedure was applied to the data set to control for disparities between the composition of the prison population and the composition of the sample. Thus, some of the larger prisons with a high percentage of survey participants may have had an outsized influence upon the reported aggregate results for some survey items. The facility comparison graphs do not require a statistical weighting procedure. The facility comparison graphs are solely based on the proportion of people within a prison who answered a survey question a certain way.

ii The number of surveys included in the sample (n = 16,236) does not match the count for individual survey items because some people did not respond to all survey items. Everyone who submitted a survey were informed of their right to skip questions they did not want to answer, consistent with guidelines for conducting an anonymous survey of a vulnerable population. If an individual chose not to answer a survey item, or chose more than one response to an item other than Question 1 (only question where multiple responses appropriate), the survey software JHA uses to process paper surveys counted the response as a 'no reply.'

iii The estimated date range of April 24th 2020 through May 20th 2020 is based on information contained within comments provided by survey respondents that were received with the surveys and the dates post marked on the business reply envelopes mailed to JHA.

iv JHA shipped enough survey packets (COVID-19 Survey, informed consent notice, and business reply envelope) to each prison listed or named within this report to ensure that all people incarcerated within these prisons received a survey packet. JHA did not directly distribute the surveys. People who operate each prison JHA sent survey packets to were tasked with distributing survey packets to incarcerated persons. Survey packets were not sent to IDOC's Northern Receiving and Classification Center because a JHA staff person involved in this project believes that writing utensils are not readily available to most people imprisoned in this facility.

v Prison population numbers are based on the IDOC population report generated April 24, 2020.

vi Jacksonville population and survey results include both the population of Jacksonville Correctional Center proper (n = 815) and the Pittsfield Work Camp (n = 148), a satellite facility of Jacksonville.

vii Menard population and survey results include both the maximum-security (n = 1,808) and medium-security (n = 363) populations.

viii Pontiac population and survey results include both the maximum-security (n = 775) and medium-security (n = 380) populations.

ix Dixon and Murphysboro are listed last because surveys from these facilities were received by JHA a week or two after surveys were received from all other facilities due to logistical issues. Additionally, these facilities were not included in the survey results reported in the "COVID-19 Survey: Report on Initial Results of Surveys Collected from People Incarcerated in IDOC Prisons" document generated May 21st 2020.

Document Generated: July 10th 2020