Date: 07/07/2019 08:33 AM CDT
Subject: VA & Mission 2018, Veterans Incarcerated in Illinois

A few weeks ago I called one of the many VA phone numbers listed on the web site. After sorting through the automated messaging system I was finally connected to a live person. He only identified himself as "Brian". In the 10 minutes on the phone he answered every question professionally and accurately. He gave good direction as to what steps were needed and connected me to a different department. While connecting me, he remained on the phone until there was a confirmed and positive hand-off made to that departments representative. I believe her name was Karen. Brian was reached through the combat vet disability number and Karen represented the VA Healthcare department. Great improvements!

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Recently I received the first pamphlet on "Mission 2018" produced by the VA. It seems a very positive shift in meeting needs of vets. In the catagory of "underserved communities" I was hoping to see something about incarcerated vets.

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At my last reading the VA Federal handbook clearly states that vetrans are elligible to obtain health and mental care not provided to the standard of VA and not provided by the prison. But! The Illinois vet handbook continues to read that "no veteran incarcerated in illinois will receive access to VA healthcare or metal health treatment"

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This is a major disconnect. The prison does not provide adequate healthcare and certainly not on par with the VA treatment which is a right due for our service to this Nation and expected for every veteran, especially combat vets who likely suffered life altering trauma.

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It is sad to me that IDOC continues to deny vets needed treatment due to politics.

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Often it is only the mercy of the individual Wardens at each prison that sometimes they will demand a vet get VA help or treatment. Back to Mission 2018...

There are mobile medical units, onsite visits, and onsite peer-peer veteran advocates that can facilitate the connection wit VA healthcare. Implementing these would resolve this problem.