

# STATEVILLE

## SPEAKS

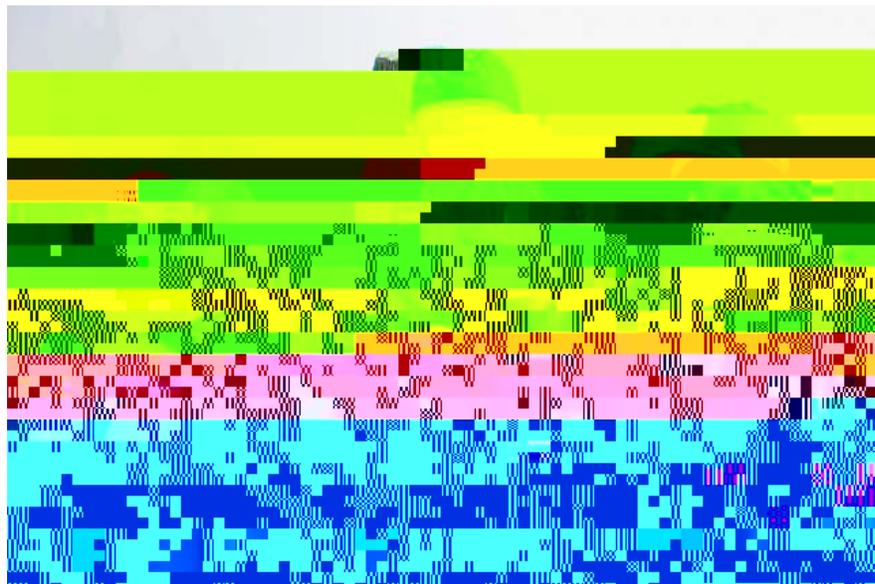
### Demands for Medical and Human Rights in Prison

*Bill Ryan*

The U.S. Attorney, Peter Fitzgerald, has been contacted regarding the need for an investigation into possible violations of human rights in the prisons of the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC). The letter, delivered on behalf of the National Alliance Against Racism and Political Repression (NAARPR), was written by Ted Pearson, co-chair, and several other individuals and organizations. The letter delivered to Fitzgerald's office on May 8, 2007, also requested a meeting to discuss a number of concerns. The U.S. Attorney's office has informed me that the request is under review.

On May 10, 2007, I wrote a letter to Governor Rod Blagojevich urging him to commit to appropriate medical care for prisoners, which meets generally accepted standards of the community at large. This care should be monitored by an independent agent. I contacted the Governor's office and was told the letter has been referred to the IDOC.

The following is the text of the letter sent to U.S. Attorney Fitzgerald.



Individual case summaries have been deleted.

\* \* \*

Dear Mr. Fitzgerald,

On behalf of our organization (the "NAARPR") and many other people concerned about human rights in the State of Illinois we respectfully request a meeting with you to discuss the need for an investigation into violations of human rights of people

incarcerated in the prisons of the Illinois Department of Corrections. Please call us at your earliest convenience to arrange a meeting. You may reach Ted Pearson at 312-939-2750 , or Bill Ryan at 708-531-9923.

Specifically, we are concerned with a pattern of denial of adequate medical care to prisoners, which constitutes "cruel and unusual punishment" in the terms of the Eighth Amendment to the United States Constitution. *"Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive*



# Prisoner Denied Care?

The National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression – Chicago is gathering evidence about medical care in Illinois prisons. The denial of medical care to prisoners who are sick or injured is a denial of the Constitutional right of all prisoners under the Eighth Amendment to be free from cruel and unusual punishment. We are interested in all prisoners with undiagnosed or untreated medical problems. Prisoners with chronic diseases and conditions seem to have the most difficulty, especially people with hepatitis C, diabetes, cancer, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, multiple sclerosis and other debilitating conditions, and mental health issues.

If you are interested in participating in this process, write to Ted Pearson, National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression – Chicago, 1325 S. Wabash Ave. Suite 105, Chicago IL 60605, 312-939-2750.

## N.I.V. has over 700+ members

We organize the voices of many to support legislation in-line with our mission statement.

The N.I.V. Mission Statement is to better society by assisting to reduce overcrowding of prisons, reduce recidivism and improve societal productivity by strengthening rehabilitation, reforming sentencing and implementing programs to advocate positive change, productivity and restorative justice for the benefit of society as a whole

Join the N.I.V. Mission in support of positive change.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(print name) Join the N.I.V. mission.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Mail slip to: N.I.V. P.O. Box 8546, Chicago, IL 60680.

program, requiring a system-wide, thorough human rights investigation.

The NAARPR-Chicago has received letters complaining of inadequacies in the health care system from over 182 prisoners in custody of the IDOC. So far, 125 of these prisoners have authorized the release of their medical records to the NAARPR-Chicago. To date we have 107 prisoner medical records, or “charts.” A certified nurse practitioner has reviewed and summarized approximately 39 of these charts so far. A summary of that process is included as a supplement with this letter. Due to the requirements of the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), the NAARPR-Chicago is not able to name most of the prisoners for whom we have charts or authorizations. However, the NAARPR-Chicago will forward any request from you for more information.

Some of these cases, which have been reported to family members and supporters, are especially alarming, and raise a bright red flag signalling the need for investigation. We respectfully request an opportunity to meet with you and discuss the need for a full and complete investigation of the Illinois Department of Corrections health care system. Sincerely yours,

Ted Pearson  
Bill Ryan  
Clarice Durham, Josephine Wyatt,  
Elizabeth Benson, Norman Roth  
Kevin Lindemann,  
Mildred Williamson,  
Wilma Lewis  
Gloria Johnson  
Reverend Doris Green  
Judith Stuart  
Jacki Gansch  
Gayle Willard  
Linda Goodman

## HJR-80 Report

Bill Ryan

The HJR 80 committee meeting on May 23 consisted of reports from the Health and Indeterminate Sentencing

Subcommittees and the submission of a research narrative by Professor Henderson.

Professor Henderson submitted a comprehensive survey of literature on the following topics: managing and treating long-term inmates; managing medical and mental health issues; faith-based services in corrections; the impact of educational programming on institutional behavior and post-release recidivism; the role of victims; a review of restorative justice programs in institutions and victim wrap-around programs; parole and indeterminate sentences.

Bill Ryan, Chair of the Health Subcommittee, submitted a report that suggested that a historical report of suicides by prisoners be submitted and that the IDOC diet be evaluated by a nutritional expert. Menard, for instance, has no alternative diet for prisoners who

**“All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person.”**