

Abusing/Killing The Imprisoned Mentally Ill

The contents is factual.

by Edward R. Clark

This writer is a prisoner for over four decades has sought prison reform. Predictably, prison officials react with punitive action including trips to punitive segregation and extended imprisonment. However, placed in segregation has provided insight into the abuse of mentally ill/impaired prisoners in segregation to the degree of causing their death, as I included in reports to the legislature: A Prisoner's Perspective; Corrections In Minnesota, and a 188-page report entitled, Maximum Security Mania - The Devolution Of A Prison System At Taxpayers' Expense. The latter especially angered lawmakers as the abuse continued for three years after I submitted the former report. An excerpt:

Obviously no prisoner suffers depression and neglect more under maximum security confinement than those who are mentally ill or mentally impaired - a growing problem since the closing of mental hospitals throughout the state and the nation. This is a problem for which there is a partial and easy way to slow down their deterioration. It is by transferring those not having a history of extreme violent behavior or sexual predatory behavior, to medium security facilities that provides a less stressful environment... It's questionable there will be any help for them because the abnormality of the mentally ill/impaired is looked upon by corrections officials as a disciplinary problem instead of a medical or psychological condition...

In the general population [of prisons] mentally ill prisoners are ignored by staff, for staff are not trained to deal with the problem, even if there is an established policy. This leaves the mentally ill