

Illinois offers veterans brain screening

by UPI

CHICAGO -- Illinois officials have announced a \$10.5 million program to screen the state's National Guard troops for brain injuries sustained in Iraq or Afghanistan.

At a Chicago news conference, Tammy Duckworth, director of the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs, and Gov. Rod Blagojevich announced the program will also be available to veterans of all military branches in the state, the New York Times reported.

"It's been shown that the federal government simply was not prepared to deal with the number of war injured coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan," Duckworth said. She is a former U.S. Army helicopter pilot who lost both legs on active duty in Iraq.

Duckworth said one of the new program's goals is to catch the milder form of brain injuries in National Guard veterans who show no other sign of concussion, which she said is a common injury from roadside bombs.

The program will also offer a 24-hour telephone hotline providing psychological counseling to veterans of all military branches.

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