



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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MENTAL HEALTH WALK-IN CLINIC OPENS IN VISTA ***North County Facility Can Serve More Than 1,500 Patients Yearly***

North County residents suffering from a mental illness will be able to show up and see a counselor immediately at a Vista walk-in clinic thanks to the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS).

The Exodus Recovery Mental Health Walk-In Assessment Center is located at 524 West Vista Way. The urgent mental health clinic will begin providing services Monday through Friday from 12 Noon to 8:00 p.m., starting March 11, 2008. An official opening ceremony will take place at 11 a.m.

“This is great news for North County residents in need of mental health treatment,” said Alfredo Aguirre, Director of HHS’s Mental Health Services division. “Mental health professionals will assess the severity of consumers’ mental illness and refer them to appropriate services, increasing access to urgent psychiatric evaluations and reducing use of emergency and inpatient services.”

The new program will offer several mental health services, including crisis intervention, substance use assessment, domestic violence screenings, medication and case management, information and referrals to community-based services.

Another innovative component of the Walk-In Assessment Center is the use of telepsychiatry—the use of communications technology to speed up mental health service delivery—saving patient and professional time, as well as travel costs.

Services are being provided thanks to a \$1 million budget from the Mental Health Services Act.

The assessment center will serve 1,560 unduplicated consumers, 18 years and older, annually. Priority will be given to people who are indigent or receive MediCal. Individuals with other health care coverage may be referred to alternate resources and services.

Approved by California voters in 2004, the Mental Health Services Act imposes a one percent tax on personal income above \$1 million for the creation of new mental health programs statewide.

To obtain more information on mental illness or to seek services, call the County’s multi-lingual Access and Crisis Line at (800) 479-3339.

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