



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: José A. Álvarez (619) 515-6635

COUNTY'S ALFREDO AGUIRRE NAMED "MENTAL HEALTH PERSON OF THE YEAR"

The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency's Mental Health Services Director, Alfredo Aguirre, has been selected the 2008 "Mental Health Person of the Year." The award will be presented during the 22nd Annual Mental Health Recognition Dinner taking place Friday, May 30, 2008 at 5:30 p.m. at the Mission Valley Marriott. Special guest Kitty Dukakis, author and wife of former presidential candidate Michael Dukakis, will be the keynote speaker at the event.

"I am humbled and truly honored by this recognition," said Aguirre. "The work and efforts for which I am being recognized are truly the result of the collaboration between all of us at Mental Health Services and our partners in the mental health community."

Award recipients are nominated by the mental health community and selected by an independent rating panel. Established in 1987, the award honors individuals who have made outstanding contributions of time and effort to bettering the lives of persons with mental illness.

Aguirre's many accomplishments, as noted in the nomination, include local implementation of the Mental Health Services Act, which was approved by California voters in 2004 and assures State funding to counties for expanded and innovative mental health programs. His state-level work with cultural competency and suicide prevention, as well as his accessibility and responsiveness to the mental health community, were also mentioned.

Mental Health Services provides a vast array of services including mental health assessments, individual, family, and group therapy, special services for children, crisis intervention and psychiatric emergency care. The County also provides a 24-hour, multi-lingual Access and Crisis Line at (800) 479-3339.

For more information on County Mental Health Services, call (619) 563-2700 or go to the Mental Health Services Network of Care website at <http://sandiego.networkofcare.org/mh/home/index.cfm>.

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