



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS ADVISORY

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COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH FOCUSES ON PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION OF MENTAL ILLNESS *HHSA Officials Seek Community Input to Plan Prevention and Early Intervention Programs*

WHAT: San Diego County HHSA (Health and Human Services Agency) officials will begin gathering community input to plan how to spend the \$16 million the County will receive annually from the Mental Health Services Act (Prop. 63) and the type of mental health Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) programs needed.

At the launching, officials from HHSA's Mental Health Services division will highlight how the new mental health programs will help prevent suicides and reduce stigma and discrimination associated with mental illness. They will also announce the populations that will benefit from these new services.

WHO: **Dr. Jennifer Schaffer**, Director, HHSA's Behavioral Health Services
Alfredo Aguirre, LCSW, Director, HHSA's Mental Health Services
Ann Garland, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Psychiatry, UCSD; Deputy Dir., CASRC
Kristen Cadenhead, M.D., Professor, Department of Psychiatry, UCSD

WHEN: **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2007 AT 10:00 A.M.**

WHERE: **Recital Hall at Balboa Park**
(Recital Hall is located in the Palisades Building)

WHY: The Mental Health Services Act was approved by California voters in 2004. It imposes a 1 percent tax on personal income above \$1 million for the expansion of mental health programs statewide.

When fully implemented, San Diego County will receive about \$16 million annually in MHSA funds for prevention and early intervention programs.

Stigma of mental illness is a barrier that discourages individuals and their families from seeking help.

Twenty percent of young people experience some form of diagnosable mental illness, while 26 percent of people 18 and older—about 58 million—suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder. Mental disorders disrupt an individual's ability to function at home, in school, at work, or in their community.

Mental Health Services provides a 24-hour, multi-lingual Access and Crisis Line at (800) 479-3339. ###