



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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## **NATIONAL AWARD GIVEN TO JOINT COUNTY HEALTHCARE PROGRAMS**

*"Volunteering to Fill Health Care Gaps" Recognized by National Association of Counties*

The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA), along with key community partner organizations, has been given a National Association of Counties (NACo) "Acts of Caring" award for two unique health care programs that address children's dental and medical needs.

"Volunteering to Fill Health Care Gaps" is a joint submission of two programs within HHSA's Public Health Services department, the San Diego Dental Health Initiative/Share the Care and the San Diego Kids Health Assurance Network (SD-KHAN). The NACo award will be given at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. on April 13. The programs address gaps in healthcare for needy children. HHSA created the programs in partnership with the San Diego County Dental Society, San Diego Medical Society, American Academy of Pediatrics, and other community-based organizations.

"These innovative programs provide preventive care, urgent care and an avenue to regular dental and medical care for children who are most at risk for disease," said Pam Slater-Price, Chairwoman of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors. "Share the Care and SD-KHAN exemplify how innovative public/private partnerships can save taxpayer funds and successfully address public health problems experienced by the most vulnerable children and families in the San Diego region."

Both Share the Care and SD-KHAN recruit and maintain a pool of volunteer dental and medical professionals who provide no- or low-cost care in their own offices and at special clinics throughout the year. HHSA coordinates and facilitates appointments and events, and enhances the volunteer programs by publicly recognizing their efforts with awards such as Public Health Champions and a Volunteer of the Month award. Share the Care volunteer dental program was established in 1994, and has provided emergency or preventive care to nearly 5,000 children. SD-KHAN volunteer physician program was established in 2000 and, in conjunction with Children's Primary Care Medical Group, has provided pro bono care and a medical "home" to 350 children.

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