



## NEWS RELEASE

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**GIVING PEOPLE HOPE*****Housing Matters Campaign Aims to Reduce Stigma and Housing Discrimination***

Home is where recovery begins.

This is the main message of two new commercials produced by the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) which are now airing in local television and radio stations. The commercials can be viewed at [www.HousingMattersSd.org](http://www.HousingMattersSd.org).

The two spots are part of *Housing Matters*, an education campaign that aims to eliminate stigma and housing discrimination against people with a mental illness.

The campaign also aims to reduce homelessness by housing people with a mental disorder in permanent supportive housing, providing treatment for their illness and offering services to help them address underlying problems that contribute to their homelessness.

“Having a place to live is the first step for homeless people to receive treatment for their mental disorders,” said Chairman Bill Horn, County Board of Supervisors. “In supportive housing, they also get social services to help them address many underlying problems that contributed to their being on the streets.”

Mental illness is a major cause of homelessness. There are about 8,500 homeless people in the San Diego region; about 25 percent of them suffer from a mental disorder. Often, people with mental illness face discrimination when looking for a place to live.

Launched last fall, the *Housing Matters* campaign will run through June 2015 with funding from the Mental Health Services Act or Prop. 63. The “millionaires’ tax,” which specifically designates funds for mental health services, was approved by California voters in 2004.

Permanent supportive housing offers rehabilitation and assists people in keeping their housing and finding jobs.

“When people have a stable home and a support system, they stop bouncing from the streets to a shelter to emergency rooms to psychiatric institutions and back to the streets,” said Nick Macchione, HHSA Director. “Permanent supportive housing with treatment gives people hope, training and opportunities to find a job. Supportive housing places individuals with mental disorders on the road to stability and recovery.”

For more information about the *Housing Matters* campaign, visit [www.HousingMattersSD.org](http://www.HousingMattersSD.org).

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