



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

NEWS ADVISORY



CASBIRT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 1, 2007

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HSA CONDUCTING ALCOHOL AND DRUG SCREENINGS AT HOSPITALS ***\$7.7 Million Project is One of Two in California, One of Thirteen in Nation***

WHAT: County of San Diego HSA (Health and Human Services Agency) and state officials join efforts in informing the public about alcohol and other drug screenings taking place at local Emergency Departments and trauma centers through the California Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral and Treatment (CASBIRT) program.

WHO: **Supervisor Dianne Jacob**, 2nd District, County of San Diego
Michael Cunningham, Deputy Director, State Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs
Dr. Jennifer Schaffer, Director, HSA's Behavioral Health Services
Chris Van Gorder, President and Chief Executive Officer, Scripps Health
Norma Devonish, CASBIRT Health Educator

WHEN: **WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2007 AT 11:00 A.M.**

WHERE: **Scripps Mercy Hospital—(Fountain Area), 4077 5th Avenue**

WHY: The County of San Diego is one of two regions in California where the CASBIRT program, funded by the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs, is taking place. The other is administered by the University of California at Los Angeles.

10 other states—Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin—and a tribal council—Alaska's Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc.—also receive CASBIRT funding from SAMHSA in 2006.

Scripps Mercy Hospital and the UCSD Medical Center are currently the only two facilities where the screenings are taking place. It is anticipated that additional sites will come online shortly.

2,600 patients have been screened by 11 health educators in the CASBIRT Project since June, 2007.

It is expected that HSA's Alcohol and Drug Services (ADS) will receive \$7.7 million for services that could continue until September 2009. ADS subcontracts with the SDSU Research Foundation—Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Studies and Services to administer the program and plans to increase the number of screeners to 15 and offer screenings at 12 sites in the County.

According to the 2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, of all Californians aged 12 and older, 14.5 million had used alcohol in the past month and 5.9 million persons were binge drinkers (drinking five or more drinks in one occasion during the past month).

CASBIRT seeks to intervene with individuals who are non-dependent but have at-risk drinking and drug use behaviors. The benefit of a program like this is reduction in healthcare costs, specifically in fewer accidents and visits to trauma and emergency rooms.

The estimated cost to California for alcohol and other drug abuse is about \$44 billion annually.

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