



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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COUNTY RECOGNIZED FOR RURAL COMMUNITY PROGRAM ***Rural Video Interviewing Program Garners National Award***

A San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) program that makes it easier for rural North County residents to access Medi-Cal and Cal Fresh through video interviewing has been nationally recognized with a Digital Government Achievement Award (DGAA).

The HHSA North Coastal and North Inland Video Interviewing Program was one of six programs across the nation recognized in the Government-to-Citizen County Government category by the DGAA.

“It is an honor that one of our programs is being recognized for the unique way it reaches out to rural populations,” said Chairman Bill Horn, County Board of Supervisors. “This is the result of the great collaboration that exists in North County and how the County is working to make it easier for rural residents to access services.”

Approximately 450,000 rural residents face unique barriers to access County services. In the past County staff or the clients would have to travel up to 90 miles roundtrip to be evaluated for eligibility for County services. The North Inland and North Coastal Regions have utilized the video interviewing technology to help these residents obtain the help they need. The success of the program is due to HHSA’s partnership with multiple, community-based organizations, including Indian Health Council, Inc. and North County Health Services.

“The County is always looking for better ways to reach County residents, and this program is a prime example of saving time and taxpayer money,” said Walt Ekard, Chief Administrative Officer for the County. “This program is a win-win for the clients as well as the County.”

The video interviewing program proved to be so successful it has rolled out to other HHSA regions and programs throughout the county.

“This program is an important step in implementing the County’s *Live Well, San Diego!* initiative,” said Nick Macchione, HHSA Director. “The video interviewing program makes accessing services convenient for our rural residents, which is part of our goal to build a better service delivery system.”

“*Live Well, San Diego!*” is the County’s 10-year initiative to build better health in the San Diego Region.

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