



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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COUNTY SEEKS INPUT ON MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

The County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) is working with the San Diego County Rural Health Network to gather input from the public and mental health professionals about the types of mental health prevention and early intervention (PEI) programs that are needed in rural communities.

A forum for residents from Rural East, North Coastal, North Inland, and Mountain communities will take place **Tuesday, March 4, 2008 from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.** at the **HHSA North Inland Regional Center, 600 East Valley Parkway, Escondido.**

To encourage widespread participation, the County is providing videoconferencing at four satellite locations:

- Julian High School, Classroom 18: 1656 Highway 78
- Warner Community Resource Center: 30951 Highway 79, Warner Springs
- Alpine Family Medicine: 1620 Alpine Blvd. Ste. 110, Alpine
- Mountain Empire Family Medicine: 31115 Highway 94, Campo

This forum is part of a series of community meetings offered throughout the County, each addressing the unique needs of a population that may benefit from new mental health services. Integrating recommendations gleaned from the forums, HHSA expects to launch new mental health programs early next year.

The new services will be funded with a portion of the \$16 million HHSA will receive annually from the Mental Health Services Act, which was approved by California voters in 2004. The Act imposes a one percent tax on personal income above \$1 million for the creation of new mental health programs statewide.

The prevention and early intervention programs will provide services to identify and treat early signs of mental illness. The objective is to reduce stigma and discrimination and to lessen the negative outcomes from untreated mental illness, including suicide, incarcerations, school failure, and homelessness.

For more information about the forums, contact Sarah Brichler by phone, (619) 584-5008 or email, sarah.brichler@sdcounty.ca.gov. People not able to attend the forum may provide their input online at www.sandiego.networkofcare.org.

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