



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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## **PUBLIC INVITED TO MENTAL HEALTH ANTI-STIGMA DEMONSTRATION, QUILT UNVEILING, AND FLASHLIGHT VIGIL TAKES PLACE MAY 29**

The County Health and Human Services Agency's (HHSA) Mental Health Services, The Meeting Place, Inc., and Sharp HealthCare are sponsoring a mental health anti-stigma demonstration, mental health quilt unveiling and flashlight vigil.

The event is free and open to the public and will take place **Thursday, May 29, 2008 from 7:30-8:30 p.m. at the Spreckels Organ Pavilion in Balboa Park.**

"We are inviting the public to come and help us change the way people with a mental illness are viewed," said Alfredo Aguirre, Director of HHSA's Mental Health Services division. "The stigma associated with a mental illness and the fear of rejection and discrimination are what prevent people with a mental illness from seeking help."

Special guest Kitty Dukakis, author and wife of former presidential candidate Michael Dukakis, will talk about her constant battle with depression and what has helped her deal with her mental illness. Community members and mental health consumers will also share their perspective on stigma and how their mental illness has affected their lives.

"We will shine a light on mental illness and make a statement that the stigma should end," said Sharron Hedenkamp, Executive Director of The Meeting Place, Inc.

For more information, call The Meeting Place, Inc. at (619) 294-2058.

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