



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION:
May 19, 2010

CONTACT: José A. Álvarez
(619) 515-6635 (619) 964-1526 cell

MENTAL HEALTH IS “EVERYBODY’S BUSINESS” *Clients Remove Labels and Eliminate Stigma*

WHAT: Dozens of people living with a mental illness are joined by family and friends to share their stories of mental illness and talk about how stigma has impacted their lives.

Participants will wear brightly-colored t-shirts with labels naming their mental illness. They will remove the labels to eliminate stigma, which is a barrier to getting help and can be as painful as the mental illness.

WHO: **Supervisor Ron Roberts**, Fourth District, County of San Diego Board of Supervisors
Nick Macchione, Director, County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS)A
Dr. Jennifer Schaffer, Director, HHS)A’s Behavioral Health Services
Markov Manalo, Recovery Innovations of California
Mental health consumers, family members, friends and stakeholders

WHEN: **FRIDAY, MAY 21, 2010 AT NOON**
WHERE: **COUNTY ADMINISTRATION CENTER—BAYSIDE**
1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, SAN DIEGO

WHY: One in four adults and one in five children experience a mental health disorder in any given year, according to the National Institute of Mental Health.

The fear of rejection and discrimination is one of the main barriers that prevent people with a mental illness from accessing needed mental health services.

Mental illnesses can affect persons of any age, race, religion, or income. Mental illnesses are not the result of personal weakness, lack of character or poor upbringing.

A mental illness is a disease that causes mild to severe disturbances in thought and/or behavior, resulting in an inability to cope with life’s ordinary demands and routines.

About 61,000 children, adults, and older adults benefit from HHS)A mental health services each year. It is estimated that as many as 80 percent of people suffering from a mental disorder can lead productive lives if they receive appropriate treatment.

The May is Mental Health Month annual event is organized by HHS)A, Community Health Improvement Partners, Family and Youth Roundtable, Mental Health America, National Alliance on Mental Illness, Recovery Innovations of California and the mental health clubhouses in the county.

People suffering from a mental illness can access services by calling the County’s 24-hour, multi-lingual Access and Crisis Line at (800) 479-3339.

###