



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO



NEWS ADVISORY

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ONE IN FIVE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY A MENTAL ILLNESS *Kitty Dukakis Joins Demonstration, Quilt Unveiling and Flashlight Vigil Aimed at Reducing Stigma of Mental Illness*

WHAT: County officials are joined by **Kitty Dukakis, community partners, and mental health consumers** at a **demonstration** and **flashlight vigil** aimed at **reducing the stigma** associated with mental illness.

Participants will **unveil a Mental Health Awareness Quilt** made from **hundreds of panels** created by mental health **consumers** and **shine a light on mental illness** during a flashlight vigil.

WHO: **Kitty Dukakis**, author of "Shock" and wife of former presidential candidate Michael Dukakis
Dr. Jennifer Schaffer, Director, Behavioral Health Services, Health and Human Services Agency
Alfredo Aguirre, Director, Mental Health Services, Health and Human Services Agency
Sharron Hedenkamp, Executive Director of The Meeting Place, Inc.
Kathi Lencioni, Senior Vice President and CEO Sharp Mesa Vista/Sharp Vista Pacifica Hospitals
Michael Steiner, friend of suicide victim
A community of mental health consumers, family members and stakeholders

WHEN: **Thursday, May 29, 2008 at 7:30 p.m.**
Flashlight Vigil—8:20 p.m.

WHERE: **Spreckels Organ Pavilion—Balboa Park.**

WHY: One out of every five Americans is diagnosed with a mental disorder every year.

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

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.

There are more than 200 classified forms of mental illness, including depression, bipolar disorder, dementia, schizophrenia and anxiety disorders.

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.

VISUALS: Quilt with panels created by mental health consumers. Flashlight vigil—participants will "shine a light" on posters dispelling myths and highlighting truths about mental illness.

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