



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

Dec. 8, 2005

Contact: Leslie Ridgeway (619) 685-2239

## **COUNTY OFFERS TIPS FOR ENJOYING ALCOHOL-FREE HOLIDAYS**

*Health and Human Services Agency Suggests Activities to Avoid Loneliness, Anxiety, Depression*

While many people get into the holiday spirit with parties, shopping and gift exchanges, there are others for whom the holidays may bring increased feelings of isolation, anxiety or even depression. Some may try to mask these feelings through the use of alcohol or drugs, which can actually make problems worse or create new ones.

The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) Alcohol and Drugs Services and Mental Health Services suggest some constructive ways to cope with the “holiday blues”:

- Get involved by helping others. Volunteer at a local nursing home or shelter.
- Invite friends to share the holidays and have a potluck of favorite foods.
- Make holiday decorations with co-workers or friends for a hospital or convalescent center.
- Exercise at least three times a week.
- Attend an alcohol-free holiday event. On New Year's Eve there are alcohol-free events. Check the websites below or local newspaper listings.
- If you're feeling depressed or your drinking or drug use is troublesome for you or your family, seek help from a friend, doctor, religious organization, or contact one of the resource numbers listed below.
  - County Mental Health Access and Crisis Line: (800) 479-3339
  - Additional mental health articles and resources: [www.sandiego.networkofcare.org/mh](http://www.sandiego.networkofcare.org/mh)
  - County of San Diego Alcohol and Drug Services: (619) 584-5007
  - Countywide Health and Human Services Information and Referral: dial 211
  - Alcoholics Anonymous: [www.aasandiego.org](http://www.aasandiego.org), (619) 265-2954
  - Narcotics Anonymous: [www.sandiegona.org](http://www.sandiegona.org), (800) 479-0062

###