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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

East County Transitional Living Center CEO to lead San Diego Homelessness Solutions Collaborative symposium: Post-White House Briefing and Action Forum on May 13

SAN DIEGO – In April, CEO Julie Hayden, PsyD, presented her ideas about fighting homelessness, drug addiction and poverty at the White House. In her slideshow and remarks, she said solving these problems requires interlocking strategies; no approach could work alone.

On May 13, Hayden, a psychologist and community advocate, will reshare her White House wisdom at the San Diego Homelessness Solutions Collaborative: Post-White House Briefing and Action Forum. The symposium will run from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Baja Room at Marina Village, 1936 Quivira Way.

At the White House, Hayden joined experts from around the United States and major federal agencies, including the Office of National Drug Control Policy, the Department of Health and Human Services and Substance Abuse, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Hayden and the other summitgoers' findings will form a Best Practice Tool Kit, with examples and resources homelessness and addiction leaders and advocates can apply in their communities.

Hayden hopes community advocates, healthcare providers and elected officials from in and around San Diego will join the symposium. Officials will discuss why a housing first approach isn't resolving homelessness, drug addiction and poverty.

"Housing first sounds good, of course, we want everybody to live in a safe place," says Hayden. "But it doesn't solve the problem. ...There is a rare population that needs only housing. For a majority of people experiencing homelessness, you have someone with addiction, mental health issues or trauma. They need a holistic approach to healing and recovery. Giving them only housing doesn't address the root causes that led to their homelessness."

Hayden's Rhombus model and program rely on three pillars, protect - prepare – propel. It has a 96% success rate among program graduates who are sober and living in permanent housing one year or longer post program.

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Symposium presenters will include Feeding San Diego Chief Executive Officer Bob Kamensky, who will discuss the power of collaboration; Serene Health's Oscar Medina, who will discuss enhanced case management and whole-person care; and Hayden, who will discuss the shift from housing first to treatment first.

Event attendees will

- Exchange ideas and identify practical next steps to significantly reduce street homelessness.
- Learn key insights from the Best Practices for Addiction Treatment in Homelessness Summit and what they mean for our communities.
- Join a question-and-answer session, network and collaborate.

About the speakers:

Dr. Julie Hayden

Hayden has invested her career in helping men, women and families transition out of homelessness and recover from addiction and trauma to live healthy, productive lives. She taps a wealth of expertise, including in strategic planning, policy application and financial management, to execute East County Transitional Living Center's mission to deliver emergency housing, therapy, job training and self-sufficiency skills to combat homelessness.

A California-licensed psychologist, Dr. Hayden has created and built several practices and successful businesses that focus on mental health and recovery, including Genesis Recovery, New Vision Counseling Center, La Mesa Counseling and The Rhombus Model and Rhombus University.

Bob Kamensky

Kamensky is chief executive officer Feeding San Diego, a nonprofit hunger-relief and food rescue organization founded in 2007. Kamensky served 35 years in the U.S. Navy and Navy Reserves. As U.S. submarine forces vice commander in the Navy, he oversaw 50 reserve commands and 2,000 personnel. After retiring from the Navy, Kamensky taught organizational leadership at Point Loma Nazarene University and consulted for nonprofit groups. He joined Feeding San Diego in 2021 as chief strategy officer and became CEO in 2023.

Oscar Medina

Medina, who more than three decades of healthcare experience, founded Serene Health IPA, a mental health services telehealth platform. He also consults for the University of California San Diego Health System on the board for Cancer Circle Network of Healing, dba We Support U, a nonprofit group he founded that aids cancer patients and their families. Medina has also served on boards and subcommittees for the San Diego County Medical Society Foundation, the California Department of Health Services and the San Diego Chamber of Commerce.