



Mental Health Association of San Francisco

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Note: Opportunities are available to interview MHA-SF and City representatives, landlords, people who compulsively hoard and clutter and their family members, as well as other members of the Task Force.

REPORT ON COMPULSIVE HOARDING REVEALS SUFFERING, HIGH COSTS SF Task Force estimates 15-25,000 people affected at a cost of more than \$6 million/year

March 24, 2009 -- San Francisco, CA – Fifteen to twenty thousand people in San Francisco may suffering from compulsive hoarding behaviors at a cost of more than \$6 million per year to public and private agencies and landlords, according to a report of the San Francisco Task Force on Compulsive Hoarding released today.

“This report is the culmination of a remarkable public-private collaboration to address a problem which has been largely hidden up to now,” said Anne Hinton, Director of the Department of Adult & Aging Services (DAAS), which funded the project.

DAAS and the Mental Health Association of San Francisco (MHA-SF) co-chaired the 28-member Task Force, which has been meeting since 2007. An estimated 1-2 million Americans collect or fail to discard objects to the point that the clutter impairs basic living activities.

The report details impacts on public and private nonprofit agencies such as the Fire Department, which gets a call a week about hoarding, and Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation, which says that 10-30% of its 2500 tenants may have hoarding problems.

“There’s a lot of human suffering here, and you can’t put a price tag on that. But we were able to quantify costs to a wide range of public and private actors that get involved in hoarding cases, from social workers to animal control personnel to landlords,” said Belinda Lyons, Executive Director of MHA-SF.

The report contains eight recommendations, including creation of an assessment or crisis team, a services “roadmap” and single point of entry, and guidelines for landlords and tenants. The report also calls for increased training and public education and outreach, as well as improved access to support groups, specialized therapy, and case management for people with hoarding behaviors.

“The report provides actionable recommendations that maximize use of current resources, leverage private resources, and build on successful programs already in place to improve the lives of those struggling with compulsive hoarding behaviors and reduce negative community impacts caused by hoarding behaviors,” said Lyons.

The Task Force’s report is available at www.mha-sf.org.

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MHA-SF is a non-profit citizen's organization founded in 1947 dedicated to improving the mental health of residents in the diverse communities of San Francisco through advocacy, education, research and service.