



SAN DIEGO
HOUSING
COMMISSION

News Release

November 19, 2012

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**A REASON TO GIVE THANKS,
\$250,000 GRANT FROM UNITEDHEALTHCARE
WILL HELP FUND CITY OF SAN DIEGO'S DOWNTOWN
EMERGENCY WINTER SHELTER FOR
HOMELESS MEN AND WOMEN**

Donation presented to City and San Diego Housing Commission officials during preparations for the winter shelter opening Thanksgiving Week

San Diego, CA—A \$250,000 grant from UnitedHealthcare to the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) will support this year's operation of the City of San Diego's downtown emergency winter shelter, opening Thanksgiving week to give hundreds of homeless men and women a warm and safe place to sleep at night.

"It takes partners who understand the depth of this need to make a difference and protect the health and safety of our homeless population," said Mathew Packard, Vice President of SDHC Housing Innovations Department. "This year, UnitedHealthcare, Affirmed Housing Group and Enterprise Community Investment have stepped up as our partners to meet this challenge, and we are enormously grateful for their support."

Costs of operating the downtown emergency winter shelter at 16th Street & Newton Avenue during the four month period is estimated at \$402,000. The grant from UnitedHealthcare, presented to city and SDHC officials at the shelter site, will cover more than half of the operating costs this year for the facility, administered for the city by SDHC.

Tony Lonigro, Southwest Region CEO for UnitedHealthcare Military and Veterans, said UnitedHealthcare is "focused on not just providing a temporary solution to the homeless....It's really about setting up the system to break the cycle of homeless, to help people move forward in their lives and get their lives back together and get back on their feet."

The emergency winter shelter served as the backdrop to [today's news conference](#) and was also attended by San Diego City Mayor-elect Bob Filner, San Diego City Council President Pro-tem Kevin Faulconer, City Councilmember Todd Gloria and Affirmed Housing Group President and CEO Jim Silverwood.

Mayor-elect Filner said he plans to have San Diego "look at homelessness literally directly in the face. This should not happen in the richest country in the history of the world."

Last year, the temporary, sprung shelter at 16th Street and Newton Avenue served more than 730 men and women, providing 220 beds per night from its opening during Thanksgiving week November 21, 2011 through April 2, 2012. Day-to-day operations were handled by the Alpha Project.

UnitedHealthcare, part of UnitedHealth Group, is a care provider network of 323 hospitals and more than 47,400 physicians serving 2.3 million Californians.

San Diego City Council President Pro Tem Kevin Faulconer said the grant from UnitedHealthcare “represents a meal, it represents a roof and it represents a fresh start for hundreds of homeless individuals in San Diego.”

UnitedHealthcare already is connected to downtown San Diego. They have provided \$15.1 million in federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit Equity to help build Connections Housing, a City of San Diego-sponsored, one-stop service center for homeless San Diegans. The facility is under construction at 1250 Sixth Avenue and will open in January 2013.

“By funding the winter shelter’s operations, UnitedHealthcare adds to its legacy of assisting the homeless in downtown,” said City Councilmember Todd Gloria.

Affirmed Housing Group, an affordable housing developer and co-developer of Connections Housing Downtown, reached out to UnitedHealthcare to request the grant. UnitedHealthcare also worked with Affirmed Housing Group’s investment partner, Enterprise Community Investment, Inc., to provide the funding.

James Silverwood said United Healthcare and Enterprise Community Investment have shown through their support for the shelter and Connections Housing that “they take their involvement in the community very seriously.”

Connections Housing will have 223 year-round beds for homeless men and women, an on-site community health clinic and an array of other services. It is being co-developed by Affirmed Housing Group and PATH (People Assisting the Homeless) Ventures.

SDHC provided a \$2 million loan and 89 project-based federal housing vouchers to support the facility’s permanent housing program for formerly homeless residents.

The San Diego City Council on July 23, 2012, approved SDHC’s proposal to administer the shelter for 2012-13 as a transition to the opening of Connections Housing, now scheduled for January 2013.

A July 1, 2010, memorandum of understanding between SDHC and the City of San Diego puts SDHC in charge of administering both the downtown emergency winter shelter and a separate Homeless Veterans Emergency Winter Shelter in the Midway District, operated by Veterans Village of San Diego.

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