



## OFFICE OF COUNCILMEMBER CHRISTOPHER WARD THIRD COUNCIL DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
August 30, 2018

CONTACT: Ansermio Jake Estrada  
Cell: (619) 909-4299 | Office: (619) 236-6633

### CITY AND REGIONAL LEADERS CALL FOR ADDITIONAL RECUPERATIVE CARE FACILITIES

SAN DIEGO, CA – San Diego Councilmember Chris Ward (District Three) issued the following statement after a joint press conference with city and regional leaders to highlight the need for more recuperative care facilities and medical respite beds in San Diego County.

Recuperative care facilities offer specialized care, recovery and assistance for homeless individuals who are too vulnerable to properly recover from injury on our streets but are not ill enough to require intensive hospital inpatient services. These facilities allow homeless individuals the opportunity to rest in a safe environment while accessing medical care, housing navigation, and supportive services.

**“The safe, stable, and supportive environment provided by recuperative care facilities following injury or illness is a critical component of the infrastructure needed to address San Diego’s homelessness crisis. Living in crisis on our streets after discharge from a medical facility exacerbates existing medical conditions and strains our system’s public health and homeless services components,”** said Councilmember Ward.

**“The crisis facing our region demands action. Currently in San Diego County, there are only 73 recuperative care beds, 41 of which are in the City of San Diego. San Diego County has the capacity to tackle this problem, but is failing to address the gaps in the system. They need to lead and must fund these vital services for those in need,”** said Nathan Fletcher.

San Diego’s homeless population is aging and will continue to have significant health conditions. According to the 2018 Point In Time Count conducted by the Regional Task Force on the Homeless, 35% of unsheltered individuals are age 55 or older. According to the same annual census, 43 percent of the unsheltered respondents suffer from a physical disability, chronic health condition, and/or mental health issue.

**“Our experience at Interfaith Community Services has shown that recuperative care programs work. Last year 75% of the civilian and veteran men and women served at our 32-bed recuperative care center in Escondido successfully stabilized the mental or physical health condition that had led to their hospitalization, and most critically ended their homelessness, graduating into stable housing. These programs help people in crisis and also allow our first responders make an even greater difference in the community. We know the tools that work, we just need the investment to deliver solutions,”** said Greg Anglea, Chief Executive Officer of Interfaith Community Services.

In a July 2018 report, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness specifically identified recuperative care programs as an important strategy for preventing and ending homelessness.

Data has demonstrated that mental health and substance use challenges are some of the most difficult barriers to getting homeless people off the streets and back on track in life, and that our current system is not equipped to meet the level of care these issues require. Failing to provide these people the treatment they need reinforces negative stigma and isolates them further from the support that will get them into a stable situation.

Hospitals are struggling to provide needed follow-up care to a growing and aging homeless population. Stories of patients `discharged with nowhere to go' or sent to shelters that lack space or the capacity for follow-up medical care have become all too common.

**Benjamin Nicholls, Executive Director of the Hillcrest Business Association, said: "The Hillcrest business community sees how the lack of sufficient recuperative care options impacts those who most need help. These people are too often left to the streets but deserve our support beyond the emergency room. The HBA supports options that provide this care in an appropriate and convenient location."**

Addressing the clear absence of services for vulnerable populations must be a priority for the San Diego region. Embracing a Housing First approach by responsibly investing in additional Recuperative Care Facilities will provide homeless individuals, who are often the most challenging to patients to treat, a clean, safe place to recover and connect with supportive services.

Councilmember Chris Ward serves as the Chair of the San Diego City Council's Select Committee on Homelessness and as Vice Chair of the Regional Task Force on the Homeless.

For more information or to interview Councilmember Ward, contact Ansermio Jake Estrada at (619) 909-4299 or [EstradaAJ@sandiego.gov](mailto:EstradaAJ@sandiego.gov)

***Councilmember Chris Ward represents San Diego's Third Council District including communities of Downtown, Little Italy, Bankers Hill, Mission Hills, Middletown, Hillcrest, University Heights, North Park, Normal Heights, Old Town, South Park, and Golden Hill.***

**###**