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Press Release

The Gay and Lesbian Center of Greater Long Beach to Launch Mental Health Counseling Program

Long Beach, California - The Gay & Lesbian Center of Greater Long Beach (The Center Long Beach) is proud to announce the formation of a Mental Health Steering Committee made up of medical and mental health professionals and community leaders. The 20 member committee is charged with the creation of a new mental health counseling program at The Center Long Beach.

"The program's primary goal is to provide affordable psychotherapy for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community in a safe and supportive environment," explains Kim Woods, Executive Director of The Center Long Beach.

The Center Long Beach received a grant of \$25,000 from LA County Supervisor Don Knabe to start the program. "Mental illness affects people regardless of who they are," said Supervisor Knabe, "an affordable mental health program like this provides access to underserved segments of our community."

The program will offer counseling services to help people deal with issues such as depression, anxiety, relationship issues, HIV status, substance use and domestic violence.

The committee is co-chaired by Long Beach First Lady Nancy Foster and community member Richard Lewis. Other community leaders include Long Beach 2nd District Councilmember Suja Lowenthal and Signal Hill Councilmember Larry Forester.

Nancy Foster is a strong advocate of mental health awareness and treatment. "I applaud the Center Long Beach for providing the necessary help for people during these challenging times with this easily assessable new mental health program."

"The steering committee is made up of a very talented group of individuals," said steering committee co-chair Lewis. "This is the right group of people to make sure that we create a strong program."

"We have a real need for mental health counseling services in our community," stresses Executive Director Woods. "This will help our community and strengthen many of our existing programs. We are so thankful for each of the community member's involvement on this committee."

The committee will be meeting regularly with the program launch scheduled for early February 2009.

About The Center Long Beach

The Gay and Lesbian Center of Greater Long Beach is a non-profit 501.3(c) and has been providing a variety of health, social, advocacy, legal and service programs to the LGBT community in the Long Beach area for three decades. The Center serves approximately 21,000 lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender clients and constituents annually through 23 different programs and services. For more information about The Center Long Beach, please visit www.centerlb.org.

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