

February 11, 2010
For immediate release

Contact:
Telephone:

2-1-1 Reports 13 percent Increase in 2009 Requests for Help

The 2009 nationwide count of calls to 2-1-1 service providers across the United States shows that over 16 million calls were answered across America --- an increase of 13% in call volume over 2008 statistics.

More than 40% of the 16,235,348 callers had basic human service needs for housing, utilities, food, clothing, personal and household goods. In the basic needs category 27% of the calls were for housing and utilities and 10% for food and meals. Requests for health and mental health services increased to 15% of all calls. 2-1-1 is available to over 240 million Americans – approximately 80% of the United States population –covering all or parts of 47 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Michigan 2-1-1 Call Center took over 660,000 calls in 2009, with caller primarily requesting assistance with housing, utilities and food. Currently, over 80% of Michiganders have access to 2-1-1 with projects in development to make 2-1-1 available statewide.

“2-1-1” was designated by the Federal Communications Commission in 2000 as the national 3-digit telephone dialing code for health, and human community services. 2-1-1 is an easy to remember phone number that connects individuals with resources in their community. With approximately 1.5 million nonprofit organizations in the United States plus scores of government agencies, finding help can be confusing and intimidating. People who want to give help often do not know where to begin. 2-1-1 centers are staffed by trained specialists who quickly assess the callers’ needs and refer them to the help they seek. It’s simple to remember, accessible to everyone at no cost, available 24/7, with multilingual capabilities. 2-1-1 offers information on a broad range of services, including rent assistance, food banks, affordable housing, health resources, child care, after-school programs, elderly care, financial literacy, job training programs and legal services.

National leadership for 2-1-1 US is provided by the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems, United Way Worldwide and the 2-1-1 US Steering Committee. 2-1-1 is funded through local and state sources including United Ways and other nonprofits, foundations, businesses, and state and local government. The Calling for 2-1-1 Act, S 211 and H.R. 211 seeks to authorize federal funding through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to help implement and sustain 2-1-1 nationwide. For more information, please visit www.211us.org.

#