



California Alliance of Information and Referral Systems



## **2-1-1 is an easy to remember telephone number that connects people with important community services and volunteer opportunities.**

### **Benefits of 2-1-1:**

- **2-1-1 simplifies access** and increases the effectiveness of the entire health and human services system.
- **Implementing 2-1-1 saves money:**
  1. A study done at the University of Texas Austin estimated that the benefit of a 2-1-1 statewide network to society would be between \$83.7 million to \$90.2 million over a ten year period (<http://www.211.org/online/docs/LBJstudy.pdf>).
  2. A study in New Mexico estimates saving \$19 million over 5 years including a reduction in 800 numbers used for nonprofits and state organizations. (<http://www.gov.state.nm.us/perfreview/Ch1.pdf>).
  3. The University of Nebraska's Public Policy Center estimates that a fully realized 2-1-1 system in Nebraska will bring \$7.4 million in benefits to the state of Nebraska with a population of 1.7 million ([www.211.org/online2/docs/211\\_reportbody.pdf](http://www.211.org/online2/docs/211_reportbody.pdf)).
  4. 2-1-1 can provide system wide cost savings through a reduction in 800 numbers used for nonprofits and state organizations.
- **2-1-1 plays a key role in public safety:**
  1. **2-1-1 relieves 911 call volume**, allowing for faster response to real emergencies and cost savings.
  2. **2-1-1 plays a major role in disaster response.** 2-1-1 proved effective after the 9/11 terrorist attacks where 2-1-1 Connecticut received 95 percent of all calls for mental health counseling, volunteering, and other services. New York did not have 2-1-1 and 400 new information lines were created resulting in confusion and a waste of precious resources. Now, in the wake of Hurricane Charley, thousands of Floridian's are turning to 2-1-1 for help in their time of need ([www.211.org](http://www.211.org)).
  3. **2-1-1 is included in the Federal Bioterrorism Act** as part of the needed infrastructure for disaster preparedness. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced 2003 bioterrorism aid for states <http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2003pres/20030320.html>. The [HHS established 17 Critical Benchmarks for Bioterrorism Preparedness Planning](#), which includes a plan for "risk communication and information dissemination to educate the public regarding exposure risks and effective public response." 2-1-1 can help fill this need. Additionally, 2-1-1 is identified as an allowable use of funding in the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness Response Act of 2002 (PL 107-188).

### **Where does 2-1-1 exist?**

2-1-1 serves approximately 172 million Americans - over 57% of the US population; 192 active 2-1-1 systems covering all or part of 39 states (including 16 states with 100% coverage) plus Washington, DC and Puerto Rico ([www.211.org](http://www.211.org)). The California Alliance of Information and Referral Services (CAIRS) and United Ways of California are working together to bring 2-1-1 to all of California.

The CPUC has authorized information and referral service providers in 12 counties to utilize the 2-1-1 dialing code: Alameda, Contra Costa, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Diego, San Francisco, Ventura, San Bernardino, Sacramento, Santa Barbara, and Stanislaus. CAIRS projects that 2-1-1 will be available to 80% of Californians by the end of 2007 ([www.cairs.org](http://www.cairs.org)).

### **2-1-1 Legislation**

The Calling for 2-1-1 Act (S 211 / HR 896), lead by Senators Elizabeth Dole (R-NC), Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY), and Richard Burr (R-NC), and Representatives Michael Bilirakis (R-FL-9) and Anna Eshoo (D-CA-14), enjoys broad bipartisan support and would authorize \$600 million over five years to assist states with 2-1-1 implementation as well as ongoing support ([www.211.org](http://www.211.org)).