

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: Health Care Committee

BILL: SB 1604

SPONSOR: Senator Lynn

SUBJECT: The Florida 211 Network

DATE: March 20, 2005

REVISED: 03/23/05

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Harkey	Wilson	HE	Fav/2 amendments
2.			CA	
3.			HA	
4.			WM	
5.				
6.				

Please see last section for Summary of Amendments

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Technical amendments were recommended

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Amendments were recommended

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Significant amendments were recommended

I. Summary:

This bill requires the Florida 211 Network to be expanded statewide. The bill requires all Florida 211 providers to coordinate services with county emergency operations centers during disasters.

The bill appropriates \$5 million in General Revenue to expand the existing 211 network and to enhance current 211 provider organizations. The bill directs the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) to distribute the state funds to the Florida Alliance of Information & Referral Services (FLAIRS) for the purpose of establishing a statewide network and enhancing existing 211 providers. Each county electing to receive state funds will be required to contribute local matching funds.

Those counties receiving state funds must provide individual expenditure reports to FLAIRS, which must forward a statewide report to AHCA. No later than January 15, 2006, AHCA must submit a statewide expenditure report to the Governor and the Legislature.

This bill amends s. 408.918, F.S., and creates one unnumbered section of law.

II. Present Situation:

Information and Referral Services

Information and Referral (I&R) services are an important means by which people identify services that are available to meet their individual needs. I&R providers maintain extensive databases on various services provided in their local communities. They act as the “front door,” through the telephone system, to Florida’s health and human services programs, directing millions of callers to the programs that can address their problems. These programs involve the full array of health and human services, including economic assistance, crisis intervention, transportation, domestic violence, disability, mental health, substance abuse, child and elder care, health care and numerous other assistance services. According to AHCA, the funding sources for Florida’s information and referral organizations vary. Funds may be provided through the United Way, county and city governments, nonprofit agencies, corporations, grants, or private donations.

Florida’s 211 Network

On July 21, 2000, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) designated the telephone number “211” to access community I&R services nationwide. The Florida Public Service Commission in Florida determined that the FCC ruling did not confer authority to the Commission to determine which organizations would be permitted to obtain the 211 telephone number. The 2002 Legislature required AHCA to develop criteria to which organizations must adhere in order to become certified Florida 211 Network providers, and required AHCA to certify 211 providers. Prior to receiving certification, all candidates must be able to effectively demonstrate that their organization works collaboratively and has written agreements with specialized information and referral systems including crisis centers, child care resource and referral programs, elder help-lines, homeless coalitions, designated emergency management systems, 911 and 311 systems.

The Florida 211 Network Provider Certification Rule (Chapter 59G-11, Florida Administrative Code) was adopted on April 28, 2003. AHCA has authorized, or is in the process of approving 12 organizations for certification as a Florida 211 Network provider. The 211 telephone number is currently available to over 13 million people in 36 Florida counties, which represents over 77 percent of Florida’s population.

The 2002 Legislature created the Florida Health and Human Services Access Act (ss. 408.911-408.918, F.S.) which authorized AHCA to develop a comprehensive, automated system for access to health care services. This system was to be implemented as a pilot project to integrate the determination of eligibility for health care services with information and referral services. Under s. 408.918, F.S., the Act authorized the planning, development, and—subject to appropriations—the implementation of a statewide Florida 211 Network to provide comprehensive, cost-effective access to health and human services information. The pilot program was partially implemented using the 211 network as the single point of entry for information and referrals to publicly funded health and human service programs. However, the 2003 Legislature did not continue funding for the project, and the pilot project, scheduled to be completed on December 31, 2003, was terminated on June 30, 2003.

Florida Alliance of Information and Referral Services (FLAIRS)

The Florida Alliance of Information and Referral Services (FLAIRS), is a statewide I&R association whose members answer more than 3 million telephone inquiries about human services each year. FLAIRS has been a leader in the implementation of the Florida 211 Network.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section 1. Amends s. 408.918, F.S., to state a Legislative finding that a statewide Florida 211 Network would be of great benefit to Floridians, particularly in times of disaster. The bill requires the Florida 211 Network to be expanded statewide to provide services in each county of the state. Each 211 provider and each county emergency operations center in the 211 service area must execute memoranda of agreement specifying how they will coordinate in the event of a disaster.

To implement the Florida 211 Network business plan, AHCA must distribute to FLAIRS funds that are appropriated to AHCA to expand the Florida 211 Network statewide and to enhance operations of existing 211 providers. The funds distributed to FLAIRS must be made available to counties on a matching basis, with each county required to provide \$1 for each \$1 provided to that county from state funds appropriated for that purpose. At a minimum, the funds must be used to achieve statewide 211 coverage.

No later than December 15, 2005, each county that receives funding must report its expenditure of the state funds to FLAIRS using a form developed by AHCA. No later than January 1, 2006, FLAIRS must provide a statewide report to AHCA that includes the individual reports and aggregated data provided by the counties. No later than January 15, 2006, AHCA must submit a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives detailing expenditure of the funds appropriated to it for the purposes set forth in s. 408.918(3), F.S., which the bill creates.

Section 2. Appropriates the sum of \$5 million from the General Revenue Fund to AHCA to fund the statewide expansion of the Florida 211 Network to all counties and to enhance the operations of existing 211 providers pursuant to s. 408.918, F.S.

Section 3. Provides that the bill will take effect upon becoming a law.

IV. Constitutional Issues:**A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

The bill requires counties to take an action requiring the expenditure of funds. Thus it falls within the purview of s. 18, Art. VII, Florida Constitution, which provides that cities and counties are not, bound by certain general laws. The bill appropriates \$5 million and requires all counties that receive state funds to match the state funds with \$1 for every dollar received. The bill does not meet the criteria for exemptions provided in the Constitution. Thus, the bill is governed by the provisions of s. 18, Art. VII, Florida

Constitution and would require a 2/3 vote of the membership of each house of the Legislature for passage.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

The provisions of this bill have no impact on public records or open meetings issues under the requirements of Art. I, s. 24(a) and (b) of the Florida Constitution.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

The provisions of this bill have no impact on the trust fund restrictions under the requirements of Art. III, Subsection 19(f) of the Florida Constitution.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

FLAIRS must disburse funds to counties on a matching basis.

C. Government Sector Impact:

According to AHCA, the bill has no fiscal impact to Medicaid.

AHCA will distribute \$5 million to FLAIRS to implement the statewide expansion of the Florida 211 Network and to enhance the existing 211 provider organizations.

A county electing to receive state funds must provide \$1 for each dollar provided to that county from the state funds appropriated. To continue operation of the 211 program, additional local funds would possibly need to be allocated. The amount of funds needed, if any, from local governing bodies would depend on the financial structure of the 211 organization and the viability, amount, and duration of current and/or future funding sources.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Summary of Amendments:

Barcode 395546 by Health Care:

Clarifies that 211 providers, not counties, will receive state funds, must provide matching funds, and must report expenditures to FLAIRS. This amendment would remove the local mandate from the bill.

Barcode 803456 by Health Care:

Defines 211 provider.

This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's sponsor or the Florida Senate.
