

1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act relating to the Florida 211 Network; amending s.  
3 408.918, F.S.; requiring the Florida 211 Network to  
4 provide services in each county and to coordinate services  
5 with county emergency management agencies during  
6 disasters; providing requirements for distribution of  
7 state funds appropriated for such purposes; requiring  
8 local matching funds; requiring expenditure reports to the  
9 Florida Alliance of Information and Referral Services, the  
10 Agency for Health Care Administration, and the  
11 Legislature; providing an appropriation; providing an  
12 effective date.

13  
14 WHEREAS, the 2002 Legislature created the "Florida Health  
15 and Human Services Access Act" in sections 408.911-408.918,  
16 Florida Statutes, and

17 WHEREAS, the act "authorizes the planning, development,  
18 and, subject to appropriations, the implementation of a  
19 statewide Florida 211 Network, which shall serve as the single  
20 point of coordination for information and referral for health  
21 and human services" in section 408.918(1), Florida Statutes, and

22 WHEREAS, in order to participate in the Florida 211  
23 Network, a 211 provider must be certified by the Agency for  
24 Health Care Administration under section 408.918(2), Florida  
25 Statutes, and

26 WHEREAS, 211 is the 911 telephone number for nonemergency  
27 health and human services and for crisis response information,

28 | is available in 36 counties, and represents 13.1 million people,  
29 | or 77.5 percent of the state's population, and

30 |       WHEREAS, the Florida Alliance of Information and Referral  
31 | Services is the statewide membership organization in which all  
32 | 211 providers participate and which has drafted the Florida 211  
33 | Network business plan identifying the most efficient processes  
34 | by which the Florida 211 Network should expand statewide, and

35 |       WHEREAS, 211 providers, who answer 3 million telephone  
36 | inquiries about human services annually, have compiled  
37 | information on thousands of human services programs across the  
38 | state, and

39 |       WHEREAS, 211 call centers make it easier for 11 million  
40 | Floridians to get the information they need to keep them out of  
41 | emergency rooms, off government assistance, out of "deep-end"  
42 | social services programs, safe from abuse, and in stable  
43 | housing, and

44 |       WHEREAS, 211 call centers also help people find job  
45 | training and assistance, elder care and child care, and before-  
46 | school and after-school care that allow them to stay employed,  
47 | and

48 |       WHEREAS, during the 2004 hurricanes, 211 call centers  
49 | provided critically needed support to many emergency management  
50 | agencies, provided information to more than 100,000 Floridians  
51 | impacted by hurricanes, were instrumental in identifying unmet  
52 | and emerging needs, and helped mobilize and manage volunteers,  
53 | and

54 |       WHEREAS, 211 will continue to be a critical part of  
55 | recovery efforts, providing a connection to help for people

56 whose lives have been dramatically affected by the 2004  
57 hurricanes, NOW, THEREFORE,

58

59 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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61 Section 1. Section 408.918, Florida Statutes, is amended  
62 to read:

63 408.918 Florida 211 Network; uniform certification  
64 requirements.--

65 (1) The Legislature finds that a statewide Florida 211  
66 Network would be of great benefit to Floridians, particularly in  
67 times of disaster, and authorizes the planning, development,  
68 and, subject to appropriations, the implementation of a  
69 statewide Florida 211 Network, which shall serve as the single  
70 point of coordination for information and referral for health  
71 and human services. The objectives for establishing the Florida  
72 211 Network shall be to:

73 (a) Provide comprehensive and cost-effective access to  
74 health and human services information.

75 (b) Improve access to accurate information by simplifying  
76 and enhancing state and local health and human services  
77 information and referral systems and by fostering collaboration  
78 among information and referral systems.

79 (c) Electronically connect local information and referral  
80 systems to each other, to service providers, and to consumers of  
81 information and referral services.

82 (d) Establish and promote standards for data collection  
83 and for distributing information among state and local  
84 organizations.

85 (e) Promote the use of a common dialing access code and  
86 the visibility and public awareness of the availability of  
87 information and referral services.

88 (f) Provide a management and administrative structure to  
89 support the Florida 211 Network and establish technical  
90 assistance, training, and support programs for information and  
91 referral-service programs.

92 (g) Test methods for integrating information and referral  
93 services with local and state health and human services programs  
94 and for consolidating and streamlining eligibility and case  
95 management processes.

96 (h) Provide access to standardized, comprehensive data to  
97 assist in identifying gaps and needs in health and human  
98 services programs.

99 (i) Provide a unified systems plan with a developed  
100 platform, taxonomy, and standards for data management and  
101 access.

102 (2) In order to participate in the Florida 211 Network, a  
103 211 provider must be certified by the Agency for Health Care  
104 Administration. The agency shall develop criteria for  
105 certification, as recommended by the Florida Alliance of  
106 Information and Referral Services, and shall adopt the criteria  
107 as administrative rules.

108 (a) If any provider of information and referral services  
109 or other entity leases a 211 number from a local exchange

110 company and is not certified by the agency, the agency shall,  
111 after consultation with the local exchange company and the  
112 Public Service Commission, request that the Federal  
113 Communications Commission direct the local exchange company to  
114 revoke the use of the 211 number.

115 (b) The agency shall seek the assistance and guidance of  
116 the Public Service Commission and the Federal Communications  
117 Commission in resolving any disputes arising over jurisdiction  
118 related to 211 numbers.

119 (3) (a) The Florida 211 Network shall be expanded statewide  
120 to provide services in each county. Each 211 provider shall  
121 coordinate with each county emergency management agency in the  
122 211 service area to determine how the Florida 211 Network may be  
123 used in the event of a disaster.

124 (b) To implement the Florida 211 Network business plan,  
125 the agency shall distribute to the Florida Alliance of  
126 Information and Referral Services funds appropriated to the  
127 agency to expand the Florida 211 Network statewide and to  
128 enhance operations of existing 211 providers. The funds  
129 distributed to the Florida Alliance of Information and Referral  
130 Services shall be made available to 211 providers based on a  
131 formula developed by the Florida Alliance of Information and  
132 Referral Services, which includes a disparity factor ensuring  
133 that all areas of the state, urban and rural, receive an  
134 equitable share of the state-appropriated funds, and on a  
135 matching basis, with each 211 provider required to provide \$1  
136 for each \$1 provided to that 211 provider from state funds

137 appropriated for that purpose. At a minimum, the funds shall be  
138 used to achieve statewide coverage.

139 (c)1. No later than December 15, 2005, each 211 provider  
140 that receives funding under this subsection shall report to the  
141 Florida Alliance of Information and Referral Services the  
142 expenditure of the state funds on a form developed by the  
143 agency.

144 2. No later than January 1, 2006, the Florida Alliance of  
145 Information and Referral Services shall provide a statewide  
146 report to the agency that includes the individual reports and  
147 aggregated data provided by the 211 providers.

148 3. No later than February 15, 2006, the agency shall  
149 submit a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate,  
150 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives detailing  
151 expenditure of the funds appropriated to it for the purposes of  
152 this subsection.

153 Section 2. The sum of \$5 million is appropriated for  
154 fiscal year 2005-2006 from the General Revenue Fund to the  
155 Agency for Health Care Administration to fund the statewide  
156 expansion of the Florida 211 Network to all counties and to  
157 enhance the operations of existing 211 providers pursuant to s.  
158 408.918, Florida Statutes, as amended by this act.

159 Section 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.