

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: Community Affairs Committee

BILL: CS/SB 156

INTRODUCER: Community Affairs Committee, Senator Lynn and others

SUBJECT: The Florida 211 Network

DATE: December 5, 2005

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Harkey</u>	<u>Wilson</u>	<u>HE</u>	<u>Fav/1 amendment</u>
2.	<u>Herrin</u>	<u>Yeatman</u>	<u>CA</u>	<u>Fav / CS</u>
3.	_____	_____	<u>HA</u>	_____
4.	_____	_____	<u>WM</u>	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

This committee substitute (CS) requires the Florida 211 Network to be expanded statewide. The CS also requires all Florida 211 providers to coordinate services with county emergency management agencies during disasters.

The CS appropriates \$5 million in nonrecurring general revenue to the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) for distribution to the Florida Alliance of Information and Referral Services (FLAIRS) to expand the existing 211 network to all counties and to enhance the operations of current 211 providers. Funds that are not encumbered in the 2006-2007 fiscal year are reverted and reappropriated for the 2007-2008 fiscal year. Each 211 provider electing to receive state funds will be required to contribute matching funds.

Those 211 providers receiving state funds must provide individual expenditure reports to FLAIRS, which must forward a statewide report to AHCA. No later than January 15, 2007, AHCA must submit a statewide expenditure report to the Governor and the Legislature. The CS defines the term "211 provider."

This CS 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 provide legislative findings regarding the benefit to Floridians of a statewide Florida 211 Network, particularly in times of disaster. The CS requires the Florida 211 Network to be expanded to each county and provides for coordination between 211 providers and county emergency management agencies in the event of a disaster. This coordination must include how a 211 provider will disseminate information that is essential to assisting individuals during a natural 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 211 providers on a matching basis, with each 211 provider required to provide \$1 for each \$1 coming 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, 2006, each 211 provider that receives funding must report its expenditure of the state funds to FLAIRS using a form developed by AHCA. No later than January 1, 2007, FLAIRS must provide a statewide report to AHCA that includes the individual reports and aggregated data provided by the 211 providers. No later than January 15, 2007, AHCA must submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature detailing expenditure of the funds appropriated to it for the purposes set forth in s. 408.918(3), F.S., which the CS creates.

The term “211 provider” is defined as an information and referral organization with the primary purpose of providing information on human service resources, a description about the service providers, and assistance in accessing those providers.

Section 2. Appropriates the sum of \$5 million from nonrecurring general revenue for the 2006-2007 fiscal year 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. Funds that are not encumbered by June 30, 2007, are reverted and reappropriated for the 2007-2008 fiscal year for the same purposes.

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

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

The provisions of this CS have no impact on municipalities and the counties under the requirements of Article VII, Section 18 of the Florida Constitution.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

The provisions of this CS 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 CS 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 211 providers on a matching basis.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The Agency for Health Care Administration will distribute \$5 million from nonrecurring general revenue to FLAIRS to implement the statewide expansion of the Florida 211 Network and to enhance the operations of existing 211 providers.

AHCA estimates that to adequately administer and fully address the increased workload activities involved in statewide implementation of the 211 system, the agency will require 3 additional full-time equivalent positions, as follows:

(1) 1.0 - AHCA Administrator Pay Grade 426, Pay Band 020, which will be a select exempt position. Serve as the Agency's representative on the FLAIRS Board, the 211 Subcommittee Coordinator for the Board, and the Agency's designated liaison to Alliance for Information and Referral Services (AIRS) which is the national organization for 211 accreditation. Additionally, this position will develop program-specific policies and procedures, develop statewide program and budget implementation plan, including the approval, distribution, and oversight of state allocated funds which will be provided to FLAIRS for statewide distribution, complete both national and state legislative bill analyses relating to 211 information and referral services, write annual reports and all other reports relating to Florida's 211 Provider System, and supervise the other two positions.

(2) 1.0 - Government Analyst II, Pay Grade 26, Pay Band 10. This position will be responsible for completing all activities relating to the Agency's certification of Florida's 211 Network Provider System. This will include initial certification of potential 211 provider organizations, re-certification of existing 211 Florida Network Providers, and the completion of onsite visits as required by the Florida 211 Network Provider Certification Rule (Chapter 59G-11, Florida Administrative Code). In addition this position will provide ongoing technical assistance to existing as well as potential Florida 211 Network Providers.

(3) 1.0 - Government Operations Consultant I, Pay Grade 21, Pay Band 7. This position is responsible for developing and implementing a statewide database and

matrix of certification requirements which will include provider requirements, and specific activity time guidelines. This position will be also be responsible for maintaining all reports and will serve as a research coordinator completing state and national research activities.

The impact of the three FTEs will be \$201,345 for FY 2006-07 and \$193,515 for FY 2007-08 with 100 percent from General Revenue.

A provider electing to receive state funds must provide \$1 for each dollar provided to that provider from the state funds appropriated. To continue operation of the 211 program, additional local funds possibly would 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:

None.

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