

By Senators Lynn, Atwater, Fasano and Hill

7-85-06

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

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17 WHEREAS, the 2002 Legislature created the "Florida
18 Health and Human Services Access Act" in sections
19 408.911-408.918, Florida Statutes, and

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

26 WHEREAS, in order to participate in the Florida 211
27 Network, a 211 provider must be certified by the Agency for
28 Health Care Administration under section 408.918(2), Florida
29 Statutes, and

30 WHEREAS, 211 is the 911 telephone number for
31 nonemergency health and human services and for crisis response

1 information, is available in 36 counties, and represents 13.1
2 million people, or 77.5 percent of the state's population, and

3 WHEREAS, the Florida Alliance of Information and
4 Referral Services is the statewide membership organization in
5 which all 211 providers participate and which has drafted the
6 Florida 211 Network business plan identifying the most
7 efficient processes by which the Florida 211 Network should
8 expand statewide, and

9 WHEREAS, 211 providers, who answer 3 million telephone
10 inquiries about human services annually, have compiled
11 information on thousands of human services programs across the
12 state, and

13 WHEREAS, 211 call centers make it easier for 11 million
14 Floridians to get the information they need to keep them out
15 of emergency rooms, off government assistance, out of
16 "deep-end" social services programs, safe from abuse, and in
17 stable housing, and

18 WHEREAS, 211 call centers also help people find job
19 training and assistance, elder care and child care, and
20 before-school and after-school care that allow them to stay
21 employed, and

22 WHEREAS, during the 2004 hurricanes, 211 call centers
23 provided critically needed support to many emergency
24 operations centers, provided information to more than 100,000
25 Floridians impacted by hurricanes, were instrumental in
26 identifying unmet and emerging needs, and helped mobilize and
27 manage volunteers, and

28 WHEREAS, 211 will continue to be a critical part of
29 recovery efforts, providing a connection to help for people
30 whose lives have been dramatically affected by the 2004
31 hurricanes, NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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3 Section 1. Section 408.918, Florida Statutes, is
4 amended to read:

5 408.918 Florida 211 Network; uniform certification
6 requirements.--

7 (1) The Legislature finds that a statewide Florida 211
8 Network would be of great benefit to Floridians, particularly
9 in times of disaster, and authorizes the planning,
10 development, and, subject to appropriations, the
11 implementation of a statewide Florida 211 Network, which shall
12 serve as the single point of coordination for information and
13 referral for health and human services. The objectives for
14 establishing the Florida 211 Network shall be to:

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

17 (b) Improve access to accurate information by
18 simplifying and enhancing state and local health and human
19 services information and referral systems and by fostering
20 collaboration among information and referral systems.

21 (c) Electronically connect local information and
22 referral systems to each other, to service providers, and to
23 consumers of information and referral services.

24 (d) Establish and promote standards for data
25 collection and for distributing information among state and
26 local organizations.

27 (e) Promote the use of a common dialing access code
28 and the visibility and public awareness of the availability of
29 information and referral services.

30 (f) Provide a management and administrative structure
31 to support the Florida 211 Network and establish technical

1 assistance, training, and support programs for information and
2 referral-service programs.

3 (g) Test methods for integrating information and
4 referral services with local and state health and human
5 services programs and for consolidating and streamlining
6 eligibility and case management processes.

7 (h) Provide access to standardized, comprehensive data
8 to assist in identifying gaps and needs in health and human
9 services programs.

10 (i) Provide a unified systems plan with a developed
11 platform, taxonomy, and standards for data management and
12 access.

13 (2) In order to participate in the Florida 211
14 Network, a 211 provider must be certified by the Agency for
15 Health Care Administration. The agency shall develop criteria
16 for certification, as recommended by the Florida Alliance of
17 Information and Referral Services, and shall adopt the
18 criteria as administrative rules.

19 (a) If any provider of information and referral
20 services or other entity leases a 211 number from a local
21 exchange company and is not certified by the agency, the
22 agency shall, after consultation with the local exchange
23 company and the Public Service Commission, request that the
24 Federal Communications Commission direct the local exchange
25 company to revoke the use of the 211 number.

26 (b) The agency shall seek the assistance and guidance
27 of the Public Service Commission and the Federal
28 Communications Commission in resolving any disputes arising
29 over jurisdiction related to 211 numbers.

30 (3)(a) The Florida 211 Network shall be expanded
31 statewide to provide services in each county. Each 211

1 provider shall coordinate with each county emergency
2 management agency in the 211 service area to determine how the
3 Florida 211 Network may be used in the event of a disaster.

4 (b) To implement the Florida 211 Network business
5 plan, the agency shall distribute to the Florida Alliance of
6 Information and Referral Services funds appropriated to the
7 agency to expand the Florida 211 Network statewide and to
8 enhance operations of existing 211 providers. The funds
9 distributed to the Florida Alliance of Information and
10 Referral Services shall be made available to 211 providers on
11 a matching basis, with each 211 provider required to provide
12 \$1 for each \$1 provided to that 211 provider from state funds
13 appropriated for that purpose. At a minimum, the funds shall
14 be used to achieve statewide 211 coverage.

15 (c)1. No later than December 15, 2006, each 211
16 provider that receives funding under this subsection shall
17 report to the Florida Alliance of Information and Referral
18 Services the expenditure of the state funds on a form
19 developed by the agency.

20 2. No later than January 1, 2007, the Florida Alliance
21 of Information and Referral Services shall provide a statewide
22 report to the agency that includes the individual reports and
23 aggregated data provided by the 211 providers.

24 3. No later than January 15, 2007, the agency shall
25 submit a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate,
26 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives detailing
27 expenditure of the funds appropriated to it for the purposes
28 of this subsection.

29 (4) As used in this section, the term "211 provider"
30 means an information and referral organization the primary
31 purpose of which is to maintain information about human

1 service resources in the community, supply descriptive
2 information about the agencies or organizations that offer
3 services, and assist consumers in accessing appropriate
4 providers.

5 Section 2. The sum of \$5 million is appropriated from
6 the General Revenue Fund to the Agency for Health Care
7 Administration to fund the statewide expansion of the Florida
8 211 Network to all counties and to enhance the operations of
9 existing 211 providers under s. 408.918, Florida Statutes, as
10 amended by this act.

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

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15 SENATE SUMMARY

16 Provides for the Florida 211 Network to expand its
17 services to all counties in the state and coordinate
18 services with county emergency management agencies during
19 disasters. Requires certain matching funds from 211
20 providers. Provides reporting requirements. (See bill for
21 details.)
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