

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, the Governor, and
 11 the 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 ss. 408.911-408.918, Florida
 16 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 s. 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 s. 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:

60 |

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, 2006, 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, 2007, 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, 2007, 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 2006-2007 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.