

1 A bill to be entitled

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

16
17 WHEREAS, the 2002 Legislature created the "Florida Health
18 and Human Services Access Act" in sections 408.911-408.918,
19 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, and

25 WHEREAS, in order to participate in the Florida 211
26 Network, a 211 provider must be certified by the Agency for

27 Health Care Administration under section 408.918(2), Florida
28 Statutes, and

29 WHEREAS, 211 is the 911 telephone number for nonemergency
30 health and human services and for crisis response information,
31 is available in 42 counties, and represents 14.7 million people,
32 or 82.5 percent of the state's population, and

33 WHEREAS, the Florida Alliance of Information and Referral
34 Services is the statewide membership organization in which all
35 211 providers participate and which has drafted the Florida 211
36 Network business plan identifying the most efficient processes
37 by which the Florida 211 Network should expand statewide, and

38 WHEREAS, 211 providers have compiled information on
39 thousands of human services programs across the state, and

40 WHEREAS, 211 call centers make it easier for more than 14
41 million Floridians to get the information they need to keep them
42 out of emergency rooms, off government assistance, out of "deep-
43 end" social services programs, safe from abuse, and in stable
44 housing, and

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

49 WHEREAS, during the 2004 and 2005 hurricane seasons, 211
50 call centers provided critically needed support to many
51 emergency operations centers, provided information to Floridians
52 impacted by hurricanes, were instrumental in identifying unmet

53 | and emerging needs, and helped mobilize and manage volunteers,
 54 | and

55 | WHEREAS, 211 call centers will continue to be a critical
 56 | part of recovery efforts, providing a connection to help for
 57 | people whose lives have been dramatically affected by the 2005
 58 | hurricanes, NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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

64 | 408.918 Florida 211 Network; uniform certification
 65 | requirements.--

66 | (1) The Legislature finds that a statewide Florida 211
 67 | Network would be of great benefit to Floridians, particularly in
 68 | times of disaster, and authorizes the planning, development,
 69 | and, subject to appropriations, the implementation of a
 70 | statewide Florida 211 Network, which shall serve as the single
 71 | point of coordination for information and referral for health
 72 | and human services. The objectives for establishing the Florida
 73 | 211 Network shall be to:

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

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

79 | among information and referral systems, including those serving
80 | persons with disabilities and special health care needs.

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

84 | (d) Establish and promote standards for data collection
85 | and for distributing information among state and local
86 | organizations.

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

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

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

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

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

104 | (2) In order to participate in the Florida 211 Network, a
105 | 211 provider must be certified by the Agency for Health Care

106 Administration. The agency shall develop criteria for
107 certification, as recommended by the Florida Alliance of
108 Information and Referral Services, and shall adopt the criteria
109 as administrative rules.

110 (a) If any provider of information and referral services
111 or other entity leases a 211 number from a local exchange
112 company and is not certified by the agency, the agency shall,
113 after consultation with the local exchange company and the
114 Public Service Commission, request that the Federal
115 Communications Commission direct the local exchange company to
116 revoke the use of the 211 number.

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

121 (c) The agency is designated the lead entity for purposes
122 of receiving and distributing funds that may become available
123 from the Federal Government to support the Florida 211 Network.

124 (3) (a) The Florida 211 Network shall be expanded statewide
125 to provide services in each county. Each 211 provider shall
126 coordinate with each county emergency management agency in the
127 211 service area to determine how the Florida 211 Network may be
128 used in the event of a disaster, including how a 211 provider
129 will respond with information that is essential to assisting
130 individuals during a natural disaster.

131 (b) To implement the Florida 211 Network business plan,
132 the agency shall distribute to the Florida Alliance of

133 Information and Referral Services funds appropriated to the
134 agency to expand the Florida 211 Network statewide and to
135 enhance operations of existing 211 providers. The funds
136 distributed to the Florida Alliance of Information and Referral
137 Services shall be made available to 211 providers on a matching
138 basis, with each 211 provider required to provide \$1 for each \$1
139 provided to that 211 provider from state funds appropriated for
140 that purpose. At a minimum, the funds shall be used to achieve
141 statewide 211 coverage.

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

147 2. No later than January 1, 2007, the Florida Alliance of
148 Information and Referral Services shall provide a statewide
149 report to the agency which includes the individual reports and
150 aggregated data provided by the 211 providers.

151 3. No later than February 15, 2007, the agency shall
152 submit a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate,
153 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives detailing
154 expenditure of the funds appropriated to it for the purposes of
155 this subsection.

156 (4) As used in this section, the term "Florida 211 Network
157 provider" or "211 provider" means an information and referral
158 organization the primary purpose of which is to maintain
159 information about human service resources in the community,

160 | supply descriptive information about the agencies or
161 | organizations that offer such services, and assist consumers in
162 | accessing appropriate providers of such services.

163 | Section 2. The sum of \$5 million is appropriated for the
164 | 2006-2007 fiscal year from nonrecurring general revenue to the
165 | Agency for Health Care Administration to fund the statewide
166 | expansion of the Florida 211 Network to all counties and to
167 | enhance the operations of existing 211 providers under s.
168 | 408.918, Florida Statutes, as amended by this act. Any funds
169 | that are not encumbered for the 2006-2007 fiscal year shall
170 | revert on June 30, 2007, and may be reappropriated in the 2007-
171 | 2008 fiscal year General Appropriations Act for the same
172 | purposes.

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