

By Senator Lynn

7-249-07

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 appropriations and authorizing
15 additional positions; providing an effective
16 date.

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

21 WHEREAS, the act "authorizes the planning, development,
22 and, subject to appropriations, the implementation of a
23 statewide Florida 211 Network, which shall serve as the single
24 point of coordination for information and referral for health
25 and human services" in s. 408.918(1), Florida Statutes, 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 s. 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 42 counties, and represents 14.7
2 million people, or 82.5 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, have compiled information on
10 thousands of human services programs across the state, and

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

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

20 WHEREAS, during the 2004 and 2005 hurricane seasons,
21 211 call centers provided critically needed support to many
22 emergency operations centers, provided information to
23 Floridians impacted by hurricanes, were instrumental in
24 identifying unmet and emerging needs, and helped mobilize and
25 manage volunteers, and

26 WHEREAS, 211 call centers will continue to be a
27 critical part of recovery efforts, providing a connection to
28 help for people whose lives have been dramatically affected by
29 the 2005 hurricanes, NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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

3 408.918 Florida 211 Network; uniform certification
4 requirements.--

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

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

15 (b) Improve access to accurate information by
16 simplifying and enhancing state and local health and human
17 services information and referral systems and by fostering
18 collaboration among information and referral systems,
19 including those serving persons with disabilities and special
20 health care needs.

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 (c) The agency is designated as the lead entity for
31 purposes of receiving and distributing funds that may become

1 available from the Federal Government to support the Florida
2 211 Network.

3 (3)(a) The Florida 211 Network shall be expanded
4 statewide to provide services in each county. Each 211
5 provider shall coordinate with each county emergency
6 management agency in the 211 service area to determine how the
7 Florida 211 Network may be used in the event of a disaster,
8 including how a 211 provider will respond with information
9 that is essential to assisting individuals during a natural
10 disaster.

11 (b) To implement the Florida 211 Network business
12 plan, the agency shall distribute to the Florida Alliance of
13 Information and Referral Services funds appropriated to the
14 agency to expand the Florida 211 Network statewide and to
15 enhance operations of existing 211 providers. The funds
16 distributed to the Florida Alliance of Information and
17 Referral Services shall be made available to 211 providers on
18 a matching basis, with each 211 provider required to provide
19 \$1 for each \$1 provided to that 211 provider from state funds
20 appropriated for that purpose. At a minimum, the funds shall
21 be used to achieve statewide 211 coverage.

22 (c)1. No later than December 15, 2007, each 211
23 provider that receives funding under this subsection shall
24 report to the Florida Alliance of Information and Referral
25 Services the expenditure of the state funds on a form
26 developed by the agency.

27 2. No later than January 1, 2008, the Florida Alliance
28 of Information and Referral Services shall provide a statewide
29 report to the agency which includes the individual reports and
30 aggregated data provided by the 211 providers.

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1 3. No later than February 15, 2008, the agency shall
2 submit a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate,
3 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives detailing
4 expenditure of the funds appropriated to the agency for the
5 purposes of this subsection.

6 (4) As used in this section, the term "Florida 211
7 Network Provider" or "211 provider" means an information and
8 referral organization the primary purpose of which is to
9 maintain information about human service resources in the
10 community, supply descriptive information about the agencies
11 or organizations that offer services, and assist consumers in
12 accessing appropriate providers.

13 Section 2. The sum of \$5 million is appropriated for
14 the 2007-2008 fiscal year from nonrecurring general revenue to
15 the Agency for Health Care Administration to fund the
16 statewide expansion of the Florida 211 Network to all counties
17 and to enhance the operations of existing 211 providers under
18 s. 408.918, Florida Statutes, as amended by this act. Any
19 funds that are not encumbered for the 2007-2008 fiscal year
20 shall revert on June 30, 2008, and may be reappropriated for
21 the 2008-2009 fiscal year for the same purposes.

22 Section 3. The sums of \$193,516 in recurring general
23 revenue and \$7,830 in nonrecurring general revenue are
24 appropriated to the Agency for Health Care Administration and
25 three full-time equivalent positions are authorized for the
26 2007-2008 fiscal year for the purpose of implementing the
27 provisions of this act.

28 Section 4. This act shall take effect upon becoming a
29 law.

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SENATE SUMMARY

Requires the Florida 211 Network to provide services in each county and to coordinate services with county emergency management agencies during disasters. Provides requirements for distribution of state funds appropriated for such purposes. Requires local matching funds. Requires each Florida 211 provider, the Florida Alliance of Information and Referral Services, the Agency for Health Care Administration to submit reports. Defines the term "211 provider." Provides appropriations.