

**ADVOCACY POSITION STATEMENT**  
**Indiana Association of Area Agencies on Aging**  
**- 211 Call Centers -**

**POSITION:**

The Indiana Association of Area Agencies on Aging (IAAAA) continues to support the enactment of the Calling for 211 Act. This act was reintroduced in January 2007, and if enacted will provide financial support for designated 211 state entities. The bill authorizes \$150 million for years one and two and \$100 million for years three through five. States would designate a lead entity (the Indiana 211 Partnership) to plan for full implementation and administration of the funds.

The IAAAA supports continued statewide implementation of 211 centers by the IN211 Partnership with support from state designated funds for that purpose. The Indiana General Assembly has passed House Bill 1344, which is reflected through Indiana Code 8-1-19.5. This bill created the system in Indiana and designated who can receive funding under what circumstances. Unfortunately, the funding must still be appropriated. We support further enhancement to HB 1344 and appropriations to each 211 Center to maintain basic functions.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The first 211 Program began in Atlanta, Georgia in 1997 operated by the United Way. The purpose of the program was to provide an easy to remember telephone number that would connect callers to information about health and human services available in their community. The idea has quickly spread throughout the country and with support of the United Ways, community foundations, and local governments. It was estimated that 65% of the country has access to 211 services at the beginning of 2008.

The 211 program in the state of Indiana was developed by the IN 211 Partnership and has expanded to cover 85% of the state. Several foundations and community organizations have assisted with funding or equipment purchases for the telephone system and computers. Ongoing funding for the 211 program in Indiana is scarce. The IN211 Partnership has been able to provide funding for the costs of routing calls to the proper centers and for weekend and evening coverage because few centers are staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**ISSUES:**

Federal: The basic infrastructure for 211 is not provided uniformly throughout the country, and federal legislation has been introduced to do so. Local 211s are each very unique, and have had to rely upon local funding to provide even basic services. That funding is usually year to year, with little security for continuation.

Indiana: The House Enrolled Act (HEA) 1159 requires the regulatory flexibility committee (committee) to study certain issues concerning human service information and referral services in Indiana. This act requires the committee to submit a report on its recommendations to the legislative council not later than December 1, 2008.

**CURRENT ACTION NEEDED:**

The IAAAA is requesting that advocates contact local, state, and federal legislators to emphasize the importance of a funding mechanism to maintain 211 centers in the State of Indiana for basic infrastructure.

The Calling for 2-1-1 Act (S 211 / House bill soon to be reintroduced), lead by Senators Elizabeth Dole (R-NC), Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY), and Richard Burr (R-NC), and Representatives Michael Bilirakis (R-FL-9) and Anna Eshoo (D-CA-14), enjoys broad bi-partisan support and would authorize \$150 million to assist states with implementing and sustaining 2-1-1 statewide. States would have to provide a 50 percent match to the grant, which could come from current 2-1-1 funding in the community, such as United Way funding, funding through other non-profits, state and local government, foundations and businesses. Funding would be administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Act closed the 108th Congress with 182 bi-partisan congressional cosponsors.

Please continue to urge your Local, State, and Federal representatives to support 2-1-1 funding and thank them for their support of the 'Calling for 2-1-1' Act. You may also encourage your congressional representative to support or thank them for supporting the act by calling 1-888-PASS211.

**SOURCES:**

<http://www.unitedway.org/PublicPolicy/calling211.cfm>  
[www.211.org](http://www.211.org)  
Durr, M., IAAAA. Email Correspondence, Final Legislative Wrap-up 3/20/08  
Indiana Association of United Ways Public Policy Update 3/26/08

IAAAA routinely updates these position papers. Please contact IAAAA at 317-818-0702 for the most up-to-date version of this document.

Date Adopted by IAAAA Board of Directors: \_\_\_\_\_