



Press Release

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United Way Introduces 2-1-1 Phone Service in Solano County through Partnership with Solano County Department of Health and Social Services

FAIRFIELD, Calif., October 24, 2007 – United Way of the Bay Area (UWBA) and the Solano County Department of Health and Social Services are pleased to announce the pilot launch of 2-1-1 Solano phone service. As of November 5, 2007, all phone calls to the Solano County Health and Social Services (H&SS) help line (800-400-6001) will be answered by United Way's 2-1-1 call center.

The transition of Solano County Health and Social Services' 800-number to 2-1-1 is the first, pilot phase of the launch of 2-1-1 in Solano County. United Way expects to fully and publicly launch 2-1-1 in Solano County in early 2008. Although 2-1-1 can now be accessed from phones throughout Solano County, until the public launch, the partners will promote 2-1-1 primarily to H&SS clients. On February 29, 2008, the H&SS 800-number will cease operation.

2-1-1 is a toll-free, easy-to-remember phone number that connects people with important community services, such as child care, flu-shot information, employment assistance, volunteer opportunities, counseling, food, shelter and more. This service will improve on the H&SS 800-number, as it is available 24 hours a day in more than 150 languages. 2-1-1 is also an integral component of disaster-response infrastructure. Nationally, 2-1-1 serves 65 percent of the American public. In the Bay Area, 2-1-1 has been publicly launched in San Francisco and Santa Clara Counties.

"Finding help in Solano County is now easier than ever: by simply dialing 2-1-1, Solano County residents can connect with the Health and Social Services department as well as access hundreds of other community services," said Solano County Supervisor John Vasquez.

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According to Solano Health and Social Services Director Patrick Duterte, “United Way’s 2-1-1 will answer as many as 30,000 calls a year that were previously handled by the H&SS 800 number. This partnership is expected to provide significant cost savings to the County and improve the quality of customer service in the first year and beyond.”

Ed Schoenberger, executive director of United Way’s 2-1-1 applauded the accomplishments of the 2-1-1 Solano Working Group: “The hard work of the 2-1-1 Solano Working Group – which included preparing the Public Utilities Commission application, gaining local endorsements, raising public awareness, and establishing local partnerships – was essential in building the 2-1-1 program for the County and gaining regulatory approval.”

The 2-1-1 Solano Working Group includes representatives from the Benicia Community Action Council; Children's Network of Solano County; Community Action Partnership of Solano; Faith in Action; First Five Solano; Interfaith Council of Solano County; Partnership HealthPlan of California; Planned Parenthood—Shasta/Diablo; Solano Coalition for Better Health, Inc.; Solano Community College; Solano Community Foundation; Solano County Health and Social Services; Solano County Office of Education; Solano Family and Children's Services; Sutter Solano Medical Center; Valero; and Workforce Investment Board of Solano County.

2-1-1 Solano is part of a United Way strategy to promote and establish 2-1-1 service throughout the Bay Area. In March 2006, UWBA launched United Way 2-1-1 phone service in San Francisco, the first introduction of this important telephone number in all of northern California. UWBA is currently working to raise additional funds in order to establish and guarantee operations for Bay Area-wide 2-1-1 service for the next five years.

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Sixty-five percent of the U.S. population can now access 2-1-1, thanks to United Way of America's and its non-profit partners' decade-long campaign to promote the service. Started in Atlanta in 1997, 2-1-1 currently reaches approximately 198 million people through 2-1-1 systems covering all or part of 41 states.

Residents from around the Bay Area can visit www.211bayarea.org to search the region-wide database of services and learn more about plans to expand 2-1-1 throughout the Bay Area. Information about 2-1-1 nationally can be found at www.211.org.

About United Way of the Bay Area

United Way of the Bay Area (UWBA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to community impact. UWBA serves Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo and Solano Counties. Our mission is to be the catalyst that enables people to strengthen their communities by investing in one another. Through the Bay Area Community Fund, United Way supports more than 250 local programs that fight poverty and create opportunities for children, youth, families and neighborhoods to thrive. In San Francisco and Santa Clara Counties, 2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember phone number operated by United Way that connects people in need — as well as individuals seeking to give — with community services. United Way's introduction of 2-1-1 is the first step in plans to promote and establish 2-1-1 service throughout the Bay Area. For more information, visit www.uwba.org.

About Solano County Health and Social Services

The Health and Social Services Department (H&SS) provides State-mandated public assistance services to promote self-reliance and safeguard the physical, emotional and social well-being of those people most at risk. H&SS also provides a variety of clinical and community health services, many of which are targeted toward Solano County's most vulnerable residents.

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