



California Alliance of Information and Referral Services



2-1-1 California Action Update - Volume 41, February, 2008

www.211california.org

2-1-1 Services Available in Nineteen Counties to 84% of Californians

February 11, 2007 was a day of celebration for 2-1-1s across the state. Four providers serving seven of the nine Bay Area counties came together for a 2-1-1 event in San Francisco, including client stories, song, and poetry. 2-1-1 anniversaries were celebrated in San Diego and Ventura Counties. New grants to support regional expansion and statewide coverage were announced by Kaiser Permanente and Homeland Security/ Office of Emergency Services.

Across the state, we see a variety of models for providing 2-1-1, with several approaches to creating and sustaining Enhanced Call Centers and affiliated Local Call Centers. Ventura County and San Bernardino County 2-1-1s provide 24/7 services for their own communities, while also contracting with providers in other counties to answer calls from their communities during nights, weekends and holidays. Santa Clara County updates their database locally, and contracts to a 2-1-1 provider outside their county for all their call handling. The Bay Area, as described below, has developed a multi-county approach to providing high quality services to all its residents.

Regional discussions continue in the far north around Shasta County, and in the Central Valley led by Fresno. Other individual counties continue their efforts to launch services. 2-1-1 California maintains its commitment and consistent efforts to develop the statewide infrastructure and support necessary to assure quality 2-1-1 services to every Californian by 2010.

Download this map from www.211california.org

2-1-1 Bay Area – Unique Seven-County Collaborative Approach

On February 11 community leaders from across the San Francisco Bay Area gathered to celebrate the availability of 2-1-1 in seven of the area's nine counties. Hosted by 2-1-1 providers United Way of the Bay Area, United Way Silicon Valley, Eden I&R and Contra Costa Crisis Center, the event highlighted the social impact of 2-1-1 services. Speakers from the private and public sectors shared commitment to the long-term success of 2-1-1 with financial support. Regional Administrator of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services John Anderson described the importance of 2-1-1 to the state's disaster response system and reported his office's recommendation that 2-1-1 California receive a \$177,000 homeland security grant to support statewide coverage.

The event concluded with the group's affirmation to achieve long-term sustainability for 2-1-1 with national and state funding; regional data-sharing, disaster planning and public education; and expanded awareness and use of the vital service.





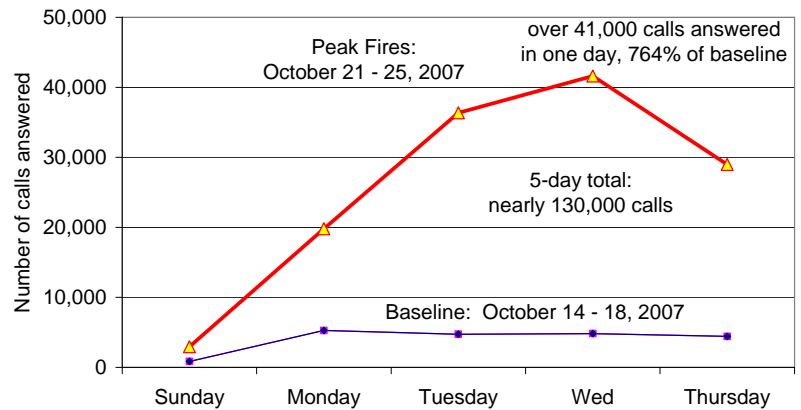
2-1-1 A Vital Resource During October 2007 Wildfires

In October 2007, Southern California communities experienced first-hand the role 2-1-1 can play during a disaster. Twenty separate wildfires consumed large parts of six Southern California counties; in all, more than 500,000 people were evacuated from their homes. During these evacuations, major highways were closed as new fires began and existing fires spread. Information about evacuations, shelters, and road closures changed by the minute.

Over the period of October 21 through October 25, 2007, more than 130,000 calls to 2-1-1 were answered in the counties of Los Angeles, Riverside, Orange, San Bernardino, San Diego and Ventura, an increase of 764 percent over the same period the previous week. In a single day, October 24th, the six call centers answered more than 41,000 calls (with 2-1-1 San Diego answering 81% percent of them), comparable to the call volume of a mid-sized call center for *an entire year*. Unlike other types of disasters, wildfires pose the challenges of shifting evacuations, fires burning and expanding over days, continuously changing traffic closures, and simultaneous situations of response *and* recovery.

See Trial by Fire report and Wildfire Lessons Learned at www.211california.org

**California Wildfire 2-1-1 Response
Total # Calls Answered***



* Includes Los Angeles, Riverside, Orange, San Bernardino, San Diego, Ventura

Strong Support for 2-1-1 Follows Wildfires

As community awareness of 2-1-1 increased during the wildfires, support increased as well:

- Over 1,200 volunteers provided 7,000 hours of service to 2-1-1 San Diego
- Kaiser Permanente provided grants to local 2-1-1s to cover incremental costs incurred during the fires and has now announced a \$50,000 planning grant to support statewide efforts
- Bank of America sent a team of trained call center specialists to 2-1-1 LA County to provide phone relief, leading to an ongoing volunteer relationship
- Qualcomm, IBM, Google, and others who were instrumental during fires commit to continue local involvement and explore statewide opportunities
- San Diego County included 2-1-1 in their FEMA reimbursement request based on their inclusion in the emergency plan and established MOU – a model that other counties can follow
- CPUC invites John Ohanian, CEO of 2-1-1 San Diego, and Maribel Marin, Executive Director of 2-1-1 LA County, to present at wildfire hearings; commissioners request additional meetings to follow up on ways that the Commission can support the continued expansion and strengthening of 2-1-1
- 2-1-1 California is invited to present at Mutual Aid Regional Advisory Committees to strengthen the local relationships on which effective disaster response relies

Nearly a Million 2-1-1 Calls Answered in California in 2007

While the wildfires demonstrated the tremendous service that 2-1-1 provides during a disaster, 2-1-1s across California help the community respond to the challenges and questions that arise in everyday life. In 2007, 2-1-1 centers across California answered nearly 1 million calls. See www.211california.org for a detailed list of calls per center.



Testimony at CPUC Wildfire Hearings

On January 9, Maribel Marin, the Executive Director of 211 LA County, and John Ohanian, CEO of 211 San Diego had the unique opportunity to present on the 2-1-1 response system during the October fires at the “Post Southern California Firestorm Workshop” facilitated by the California Public Utilities Commission. The goal of the workshop was to discuss lessons learned and best practices during the disaster, and included a panel discussion about the 211 in Southern California, the Reverse 911 system and emergency notification system, and other systems in place to help those during the fires. Maribel and John spoke to the commission about the vital role that 2-1-1 played in aiding evacuees and victims of the fires and the importance of ensuring that all Californians have access to 2-1-1 services in the event of a disaster. The Commission expressed much interest in pursuing further discussions with 2-1-1 leadership to address the recommendations presented at the workshop. Next steps include:

- CAIRS Board representatives to meet with Commissioners Chong and Simon to more specifically address the recommendations made at the workshop.
- Collect data on phantom/ghost calls for analysis as requested by Verizon (AT&T will also be contacted to get them working on this same issue).
- Reconnect with OES regarding recommendation made to the CPUC where there is joint action needed.

2-1-1 CA Says Goodbye to a Few Good Leaders

Sara Matta, Executive Director of 211 San Diego for 21 years and I&R and 211 pioneer retired in October. For over two decades, Sara was a leader in the field and served on both the AIRS and CAIRS Boards advancing the professionalization of I&R. She was also a founding member of 2-1-1 CA and helped draft the statewide business plan. The good news is that after a short hiatus, she has agreed to continue being active with 2-1-1 CA in its statewide deployment efforts; a heroic effort considering she and her husband are currently undertaking reconstruction of their home, lost in the October wildfires.

Mark Walker, past President of the United Ways of California,, resigned his position as CEO of United Way of Silicon Valley in October to become managing director of global community affairs at Applied Materials. Mark was instrumental in cementing the partnership between CAIRS and the UWs that led to the creation of 2-1-1 CA. He further provided leadership in building the resource base for the organization by securing agreements for annual financial contributions from the UWs and 2-1-1s. As a member of the leadership team, Mark helped to set the agenda that now guides the plan for 2-1-1 statewide coverage by 2010.

Paul Jacks retired as Deputy Director of the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services at the end of February. Paul was a tremendous advocate for 2-1-1 and helped 2-1-1 CA by ensuring that we were invited to participate in important OES planning activities such as the Governor’s Emergency Partnership Advisory Workgroup (building public-private partnerships for disaster response) and the State Emergency Plan Update process. He further supported an award to 2-1-1 CA from the OES/Homeland Security Planning Grant Program that will be used in developing a statewide 2-1-1 emergency response plan and technology infrastructure.

Technology Inventory Update

2-1-1 California is commissioning the development of a technology plan that articulates and estimates costs of investments needed to achieve statewide coverage. The technology plan is also intended to guide implementation of a statewide backbone to ensure that in the event of a disaster, the entire state is equipped with the infrastructure needed for managing and effectively routing disaster related 2-1-1 call surges. In preparation for the comprehensive technology plan, 2-1-1 CA is updating the inventory of technology used at existing and emerging 2-1-1 centers. The inventory exercise will explore telephony and database options that can serve as the foundation for statewide connectivity of all 2-1-1 centers. This information will support building a cohesive statewide system and avoid fragmentation with the goal to advance the system toward developing ubiquitous coverage by 2010.



Public Policy

On January 18, 2008, the 2-1-1 CA leadership team met with policy team members of the United Ways of California to discuss joint policy objectives to **achieve its goal of 100% coverage in 2010**. The resulting policy agenda is as follows:

2-1-1 California seeks state action that:

Requires a study to be conducted and an inventory to be prepared of all State hotline and other public information services (internally provided as well as State contracted) that have the potential of being provided by 2-1-1 system, and to assess the benefit and feasibility for transfer to 2-1-1

Additional policy actions that will support the goal:

1. List 211 providers as eligible for CalNet contract
2. Incorporation of 211 in statewide and local plans, including but not limited to the State Emergency Plan
3. A requirement for State Agencies in the areas served by 2-1-1¹ to utilize and adequately fund 2-1-1 for hotlines and public information services unless determined that 2-1-1's cannot provide functional requirements
4. Sets forth funding priorities that assure that no less than 95% of Federal and State funding flows to lead entity for distribution to 211 operations (ensures that State administrative/overhead costs are minimized)
5. Sufficiently provides for funding for I&R/2-1-1 training, staff certification, agency accreditation, and operational/technical support capacity, including through eligibility for sources such as teleconnect, lifeline or other existing funds
6. Establishes 2-1-1 California as the lead entity in the State with authority to oversee service compliance with AIRS standards and distribute State and Federal funds to 2-1-1 providers
7. Provides for "Good Samaritan" protection of 211 service providers

2-1-1 California Hosts Statewide Summit

In September 2007, 2-1-1 California organized a statewide summit to further develop its action plan for achieving 2-1-1 for *all* Californians by 2010. Hosted by the Office of Emergency Services, the summit provided an opportunity for emerging 2-1-1 leaders to meet with others from their regions, provide input on the statewide strategy and approach, and share information on key topics including fund development and disaster preparedness in a workshop setting. Plans for another summit in the fall of 2008 are beginning to take shape.

Find more information on 2-1-1 in California at www.211california.org
For questions about 2-1-1 activities in California, contact Elizabeth Sadlon at sadlon@mindspring.com

¹ Including but not limited to health, human services, and disaster services