

CAIRS

NEWSLETTER

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CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE OF INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES

2-1-1 is Catalyst for CAIRS and United Way Partnership

By Mark Walker, President & CEO, United Way Silicon Valley and team lead, "Break the Barriers" Grant for 2-1-1



Mark Walker

Strong communities don't just happen. They require hard work, planning and cooperation from every community-based organization. Integral within this is the work of Information and Referral organizations and United Ways.

CAIRS, local I&Rs and UWs around the state will be celebrating 2-1-1 availability in many counties soon. Today we celebrate the beginning of a new strategic partnership between CAIRS and United Ways within California. It's the result of incredible work by passionate people, all with a vision that we can build stronger communities through a new partnership around 2-1-1. Slightly more than a year ago, CAIRS and United Ways embarked on a journey to build collaboration that would expedite the implementation of 2-1-1 throughout California. We've learned a great deal in the past year as we developed the partnership. Partnerships are about people, collaboration and vision. And, sometimes about the right incentives.

The vision was to enhance fundraising, increase awareness of 2-1-1's benefits, and develop a framework of mutual cooperation to bring 2-1-1 to every county in the state. To accomplish this United Ways first needed to strengthen their interaction among each other. This was accomplished

and is now the catalyst for many UW endeavors.

The incentive came from United Way of America who offered a \$50,000 grant to organize and mobilize United Ways throughout the state and develop a dialogue with CAIRS that would lead to creation of a roadmap for future collaboration.

Building this partnership has not been easy. Maintaining it will be even more challenging. It all started with the mutual desire for state legislation as a companion for pending federal 2-1-1 legislation. We learned much from the experience. Understanding each other's combined legislative needs and consistent dialogue became the cornerstones of our new partnership. Our phone bills attest to the amount of dialogue!

United Ways and CAIRS announced an agreement in principal for an MOU between the two organizations at the annual CAIRS conference on September 20, 2004. Local United Ways are expected to ratify this agreement within weeks.

Some very positive outcomes were achieved.

- Invaluable legislative experience including learning more about state agencies and their role in the political process.
- Strengthened relationship building for legislative support.
- UWs became focused, strategic and collaborative. This effort resulted in reconstituting our state association.

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CAIRS Celebrates 25 Years of I&R

Spirits were high as members gathered to celebrate the 25th anniversary of CAIRS at this year's annual conference. Attendees were joined by numerous former board members who gave vivid accounts of the organization's history during an entertaining luncheon.

This year's conference was held on September 20 at the San Francisco Clarion Hotel located near the airport on the Bay. Almost 100 participants attended from a variety of agencies around the state.

They attended twenty workshops that included the usual basics – I & R 101, 102, Taxonomy and Accreditation – and new offerings that included Disaster Preparedness, Medicare Modernization Act and workshops on Assistive Technology and Sleep Deprivation.

The workshops were well received with many getting high marks on their evaluations for quality of presentation and being very informative.

First-time attendee Kim Cantrell was happy to have an opportunity to meet other I & R professionals. "I am new to the field," said Kim. "This gave me an opportunity to learn about how others answer calls and some new tricks of the trade."

Almost a dozen people took the AIRS certification test proctored by CAIRS Board Member Angie Bauer of InfoLink Orange County. Angie was optimistic about their success, but noted that the tests were submitted to AIRS for scoring and the candidates could not expect to hear their results for about three weeks.

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Letter from the President . . .



Friends:

As many of you know, we have been working hard with stakeholders across the state to pass a bill in the California legislature to move 2-1-1 forward by authorizing the establishment of a lead agency to ensure statewide coverage. The effort paid off with the passage of AB 2283 by large margins in both houses of the Legislature. I want to particularly acknowledge the help and work of Assemblywoman Judy Chu and her staff. Assemblywoman Chu authored the bill and it could not have passed without her steadfast support.

Unfortunately, on September 27, Governor Schwarzenegger vetoed AB 2283. We are very disappointed, and believe that the governor missed a real opportunity to help California prepare for natural disasters and other emergencies. The veto unwisely signals that California is not ready to recognize the benefits that 2-1-1 can provide to all Californians. The time to put critical infrastructure in place is before a disaster strikes.

I know that I don't have to tell CAIRS members about the benefits of 2-1-1. But I wanted to make sure you know that in Florida, which has been battered by four major hurricanes in recent months, the 2-1-1 system has proven to be a major boon to those seeking emergency and other services. As the Riverside Press-Enterprise noted on August 27, 2004, "The 211 system has proven its effectiveness in Florida after Hurricane Charley. . . Call centers quickly referred residents to services and reduced the volume of calls to 911, the three-digit number reserved for emergency response calls."

It is unfortunate that we were not ultimately successful this year in passing AB 2283. But, as many of you know, it can take a number of years for some bills to pass, especially on a subject many legislators are not familiar with. In his veto message the Governor noted his support for Californians to have access to information and referral to social services. 2-1-1 is the best way to do that, and we look forward to working with the Legislature and the Governor's office to craft a bill he can sign, and get it enacted as soon as possible. As past events in California and across the nation have shown, getting people information quickly can mean the difference between life and death.

— Maribel Marin, CAIRS President

Welcome New CAIRS Board Member



Tara Sullivan - Hames comes to the I&R field from a background in politics and advocacy, including a BA in Political Science from the University of California,

Santa Barbara and a six-year stint as an aide to a California state legislator. She served on the Fresno County Juvenile Justice Commission, helping to revise policies and supporting humane improvements in the county juvenile hall facility. Previously she interned as a research assistant in the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in Washington D.C.

Tara helped launch HelpCentral.org, a

comprehensive online Information & Referral project in Butte County two years ago and continues to assist with the management, expansion, and promotion of the project. "I tend to believe that all things are possible. Even without a call center, our project is becoming a nexus for helping people who are more isolated in rural communities get connected to needed services. As a CAIRS Board member, I am looking forward to finding strategies to help make 2-1-1 a reality in even the remotest parts of the state." Tara is currently immersed in public advocacy for educational innovation and excellence in local public schools. "I know I can make a difference in my community. That's what I love about the I&R community—it is populated with people who are supporting humanity and working well with others along the way."

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Nancy Findeisen
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Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

Are you involved with your local Continuum of Care (CofC) system? This is an extremely important question for Information and Referral (I&R) Service Providers to be asking. CofC's are local bodies that plan for and coordinate homeless services. They are typically made up of homeless shelter providers and supportive services providers that target those at-risk of homelessness and the homeless, as well as other government and municipal entities invested in this special population of need.

As providers of I&R, we know that a large part of call inquiries are related to homeless issues, including eviction prevention assistance, cash aid for rent, shelter referrals, Section 8 referrals and other housing resources. Not mentioned are all the other health and human service needs that may contribute to a person's status of homelessness. Most of us have assisted the caller faced with unemployment, diagnosis of a catastrophic illness, divorce or the working family priced out of affording local housing.

Since 1994 the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has poured millions of dollars into programs across the nation that support solving problems of housing and homelessness. Sadly, the number of homeless people continues to rise. If we picture homelessness today it displays not only single adults but youth, older adults and families. The issue of homelessness in our country is at a state of emergency. Due to this, in 2002 Congress set in motion a 10-year plan to end chronic homelessness.

Two years into this charge to reduce our homeless populations, more and more communities are preparing for the implementation of a software tool to gain insight into their local situation. If you are involved with your local CofC, you most certainly are aware of the computerized data collection system for gathering information on homeless individuals and families. This system is known nationally as HMIS, Homeless Management Information System. An HMIS is generally a web accessible, computerized data collection application that facilitates the collection of information on homeless individuals and families using residential or other homeless assistance services. This system stores data in an electronic format. Please note there are many vendors offering this very sophisticated software product, so communities can select a product that meets their local needs.

You might be asking yourself how this system helps benefit the homelessness initiative. Benefits for the homeless include the reduction in duplicative intakes and assessments, the streamlined process to comprehensive referrals, coordinated case management, and determination of benefit eligibility. Benefits for agencies include tracking client outcomes; coordinating services – internally among agency programs and externally with other providers; preparing financial and programmatic reports for investors, boards, and other stakeholders. Benefits for public policy makers and advocates include understanding the extent and scope of homelessness, unduplicated counts, identifying service gaps, informing system design and policy decisions, and development of a forum for addressing community-wide issues.

Information and Referral is a key component of HMIS. Components in most systems include the provider database of available resources, online referrals, integration of I&R referrals into client record, shelter bed availability and bed reservation. Connection to the comprehensive services one may need to stabilize the often multi-layered situation that led up to or prolonged homelessness has been recognized by HUD and incorporated into the standard data element requirements for this system. Amazingly many I&Rs are unfamiliar with their local CofC

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Conference *(from page 1)*

The highlight of this year's conference was a lively luncheon celebrating the organization's 25th anniversary. Several former board members attended and enjoyed the reunion with current and former CAIRS members. They included current member Betty Creary who was instrumental in coordinating the event, serving as CAIRS' liaison with the Clarion Hotel.

Also in attendance were Linda Beth Swan, Wayne Everingham, Sharon DeCray, Carol Hoshizaki, Elise Levine, Ginny Stafford, Barbara Stanke, Patricia Draper, Susan Martin, Jerome Burstein, Mary Gross, Wayne Lindley, Sidney Pucek, Katharine DeYoung and Annamaria Swardenski.

There was much laughter as Linda Beth Swan, Sharon DeCray and Mary Gross took turns speaking about their respective times on the board.

Mary reminisced about the early days of CAIRS in the 1970's when the organization was just getting started. She talked about the more informal meetings and the struggle to grow beyond the small group of founding members. "I&R was not really recognized as a profession at that time," she said. "We had to really work to make people see the value of what we were doing."

Linda Beth Swan kept up the remembrances of past boards and struggles during her tenure in the 80's and Sharon talked about dealing with a more established organization and membership in the 90's.

In addition to celebrating the 25th anniversary, members approved a change in the bylaws to allow the board to conduct electronic meetings. Mark Walker of United Way Silicon Valley was recognized with CAIRS' Award Of Excellence for his work on 2-1-1. Mark was instrumental in completing a Memorandum of Understanding between CAIRS and United Way California cementing a partnership between CAIRS and most UW chapters in California to help implement, promote and fund 2-1-1 services.

The success of this year's conference was due, in no small part, to the very hard work of conference committee chairs Elaine Curry (Interfaith Children & Family Services of Ventura County) and Anne Stundahl (12th Marine Corps District), who did the lion's share of work coordinating what everyone agreed was one of CAIRS' best conferences ever.

– Allan Friedman

The Rollercoaster of AB 2283

By Sara Matta

State legislation sponsored by CAIRS and authored by Assemblywoman Judy Chu, AB2283, would have strengthened the 2-1-1 system in California and prepared the way for allocating federal funds once the Federal "Calling for 2-1-1 Act" passes. CAIRS members, United Ways, and other partners across the state mounted an aggressive grassroots effort, which resulted in strong bipartisan support. AB 2283 made it through the California Legislature and to the Governor's desk but was vetoed by Governor Schwarzenegger on September 27. Announcing this in a press release CAIRS President Maribel Marin noted, "There is a ray of light in the veto message in that the

Governor noted his support for 'ensuring that persons have access to information and referral to social services.' 2-1-1 is the best way to do that, and we look forward to working with the Legislature and the Governor's office to craft a bill he can sign and get it enacted as soon as possible."

Thanks to all who helped in this effort this past year. Although this decision is disappointing, we are prepared to work even harder next year to get 2-1-1 legislation in California enacted, so stay tuned.

And on the Federal Legislation Front... Representative Mary Bono supports the Calling for 2-1-1 Act! Congratulations to Assemblyman John Benoit and United

Way of the Desert and Volunteer Center of Riverside County on their joint efforts to secure Representative Bono as a Co-Sponsor for the Calling for 2-1-1 Act! Below is the current list of California Legislators who are in support. If your Congress member is not on the list please contact them. In order for this legislation to move forward, half of all Legislators have to be on board this Fall. An easy way for you to help is to call United Way of America's **1-888-PASS211** today and ask your Representative to support "The Calling for 2-1-1 Act" – HR3111. For information on the legislation and talking points for meeting with your legislators, go to www.211.org.

California Co-Sponsors of the "Calling for 2-1-1 Act" as of 10/1/04

District	Party Affiliation	Legislator	Date Signed on as Co-Sponsor
CA 12	D	Rep. Lantos, Tom	1/20/2004
CA 14	D	Rep. Eshoo, Anna G.	9/17/2003
CA 15	D	Rep. Honda, Michael M.	11/6/2003
CA 16	D	Rep. Lofgren, Zoe	12/8/2003
CA 18	D	Rep. Cardoza, Dennis A.	2/24/2004
CA 19	R	Rep. Radanovich, George P.	6/25/2004
CA 23	D	Rep. Capps, Lois	6/17/2004
CA 27	D	Rep. Sherman, Brad	1/20/2004
CA 28	D	Rep. Berman, Howard L.	1/20/2004
CA 29	D	Rep. Schiff, Adam B.	1/20/2004
CA 30	D	Rep. Waxman, Henry A.	1/20/2004
CA 33	D	Rep. Watson, Diane E.	3/9/2004
CA 36	D	Rep. Harman, Jane	2/24/2004
CA 37	D	Rep. Millender-McDonald, Juanita	2/24/2004
CA 45	R	Rep. Bono, Mary	9/14/2004
CA 47	D	Rep. Sanchez, Loretta	2/24/2004
CA 5	D	Rep. Matsui, Robert T.	1/20/2004
CA 50	R	Rep. Cunningham, Randy	9/8/2004
CA 51	D	Rep. Filner, Bob	3/17/2004
CA 53	D	Rep. Davis, Susan A.	2/24/2004
CA 7	D	Rep. Miller, George	2/24/2004
CA 9	D	Rep. Lee, Barbara	10/1/2003
CA	D	Sen. Boxer, Barbara	6/3/2004
CA	D	Sen. Feinstein, Dianne	2/23/2004

Reach a Statewide Audience with CAIRS

Have a conference, service or product you want to promote statewide? Consider purchasing ads in the CAIRS Newsletter. The current circulation is over 200, with membership in CAIRS continuing to grow. The Newsletter is published four times a year. We are offering very low introductory advertising rates:

For-Profit rate = \$400 for 4 quarter page ads (\$100 per ad)

Non-Profit rate = \$200 for 4 quarter page ads (\$50 per ad)

If you are interested in placing an ad in the next CAIRS newsletter contact Barbara Bernstein at Eden I&R in Hayward at (510) 537-2710, ext. 8; or by email: bbernstein@edenir.org



CAIRS Membership Update—New Members and New Benefit

CAIRS membership continues to grow with the addition of 23 new members. United Way organizations led the field with six new members, bringing the total number of United Way CAIRS members to 13. Three Area Agencies on Aging joined CAIRS this year for a total of four Area Agency members. Other new members represent a broad spectrum of information and referral providers serving AIDS patients, youth, ethnic communities, rural populations and people with brain injuries, to name a few.

CAIRS welcomes these new members and also thanks our over 50 continuing members. Our membership campaign is still in progress as we want to reach the century mark by the end of the year. Please become a CAIRS ambassador and recruit colleagues in the information and referral field to join our professional association. Information on membership can be found on the CAIRS website, www.cairs.org.

CAIRS members enjoy a variety of benefits, including discounts on conferences and workshops, the CAIRS newsletter, and networking opportunities with colleagues. This year's members will gain a new benefit: being listed in the *CAIRS Information and Referral Directory*.

By the end of 2004, CAIRS will publish on-line or in print its new *CAIRS Information and Referral Directory*. Only CAIRS members will be listed in this new directory of information and referral providers. The Directory will be a resource for people throughout the state, and it will provide excellent exposure for CAIRS members. Encourage your colleagues to join CAIRS and be listed in the first Directory.

– Nancy Findeisen

CAIRS Board approves Vendor Policy

The CAIRS board of directors approved and implemented a new policy it hopes will lead to additional funding for and expansion of its conference offerings. The vendor policy approved by the board will allow CAIRS to solicit sponsors to underwrite the costs of putting on its annual conference and training events.

The policy also provides guidelines for vendors to participate in the conference for a fee. The September 20th annual conference had three sponsors: SBC, Simpson Partners and Strategies. Each made a substantial donation that helped underwrite the celebration of CAIRS' 25th anniversary. MarinLink was CAIRS' first paying ven-

dor. They had a display right outside the ballroom near many of the workshops where they demonstrated an I&R database product.

The board hopes to solicit several vendors for future conferences who have products and services that would be of interest to I&R professionals. "We see this as a way to keep costs down for our members" said board member Maribel Marin. "It will also afford attendees an opportunity to see what's new in the marketplace for I&R." Although most exhibit space at the conferences will be for vendors, who will pay a fee, space at no cost is also being made available for member organizations who

want to share information about their programs.

If your organization would like to exhibit at the next CAIRS conference, contact Allan Friedman (cfilc@cfilc.org).

– Allan Friedman



Mark Walker (from page 1)

• New respect for the important work of both I&Rs and UWs in the community.

Finally, it's people who make the difference. There are too many to mention but I must single out the CAIRS leadership team – Maribel Marin as board chair and Sara Matta as 2-1-1 chair. They never quit trying to find common ground that supported both organizations' positions. Lynn Pesely was superb in wearing at least two hats. She had the most challenging job of being the liaison (means stuck in the middle) for CAIRS and UWs. Being strong behind the scenes arbitrators were folks like Ed Schoenberger, Nancy Findeisen, Rich Kriegbaum (also wears a UW hat)

and the entire CAIRS Board. The United Way team was so supportive. From Sherry Simmons, at United Way Silicon Valley, to Peter Bishop at United Way of America, everyone responded to our calls for action. This includes CEOs around the state who served as regional team leads – Anne Wilson, Clare Thain, Jay Coughlin, Linda Avedon, Doug Rowand, Dave Smith and Fred Baranowski. And special thanks to Nona Tobin for getting the effort kicked off.

All of our organizations will be stronger from our efforts this year. The journey has only begun. The outcome of how we change community connectedness still

waits. I look forward to our continued pursuits.



Maribel Marin presents Mark Walker with the CAIRS Award of Excellence

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Angie Baur

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**Now is a great time to get more involved!
 Applications are currently being accepted for
 CAIRS Board membership by going to
 CAIRS@hotmail.com**



Vision Statement

A strong network of organizations that ensures everyone can easily access high quality information and referral for health and human services.

Mission Statement

To enhance the effectiveness of Information and Referral services through leadership, education and support.

Goals

In order to achieve the Mission and Vision, the following goals have been established:

To *provide* training and support to enhance professional skills;

To *facilitate* the exchange of information among the membership and others within the helping professions;

To *promote* awareness of Information and Referral services;

To *advocate* for the interests of the profession and the public it serves.

Dear CAIRS Newsletter Readers:

Due to a variety of reasons the last issue of the CAIRS Newsletter was received very late by our readers. We apologize for the tardiness.

Barbara Bernstein
CAIRS Newsletter Editor

Public libraries are all the same, right?

Well, yes and no. Public libraries do serve their communities and respond to their patrons' needs, provide free programs for children, teens and adults, and provide current information on just about *everything*. But some public libraries are "different" in the way they function. For example, the Buena Park Library District is different from most of the other public libraries in Orange County.

We are not a city library, nor are we a branch of the Orange County Public Library system. The Buena Park Library District is a special district, just like water, waste management, mosquito abatement and other types of special service districts. There are only about a dozen special district libraries in the state of California, with others in nearby Placentia, Palos Verdes and Altadena.

Recently the Buena Park Library completed its Strategic Plan for 2004-2007 with the assistance of 17 representatives of local education, cultural, business and governmental agencies, as well as Library staff and Board members. The following three strategic directions were developed and were used to direct the planning of goals and objectives:

1. Maintain and strengthen existing library services – including the use of volunteers and facilitating community education.
2. Enhance the capacity of the Library as the community's information, education and learning center.
3. Promote the Library and educate all segments of the community about its mission and services.

WHY CAIRS? So where does CAIRS fit into this scenario? Why, **EVERYWHERE**, and naturally so. As the Library's Public Services Manager, I strongly believe that the Buena Park Library District is a NATURAL FIT to the California Alliance of Information and Referral Services because *that is what we do as a public library* – information and referral – and keeping pace with the latest trends and developments to assist our patrons. A number of our library patrons regularly look for assistance with social and human services, and it is gratifying to have at our fingertips a HUGE network of possibilities, services and assistance to our community. We are also a professional organization built upon the foundation of freedom of and access to information. Any support, training and education we can provide or take advantage of as a CAIRS member only helps make us all in the CAIRS network stronger and more reliable resources for the people who need us the most ... our communities.

We look forward to a long and successful relationship with CAIRS. Sincere thanks goes to Angie Baur from the all Library staff for her initial invitation to the Buena Park Library District over a year and a half ago to join this wonderful organization. Way to go, Angie!

– Kathleen M. Wade

HMIS (from page 3)

planning processes for implementing HMIS in their community. Local comprehensive I&Rs could play a role in determining continuum needs by integrating their Information & Referral system and/or the 2-1-1 social service telephone calling system with HMIS.

As presently envisioned by HUD, the Information & Referral component of HMIS will allow homeless individuals to access information regarding available shelter and services from a single access point. Since Information & Referral is the core component of the future 2-1-1 Calling Systems being planned for California, regionally established HMIS implementation strategy calls for simultaneous technology integration. Implementing and operating a local/regional community HMIS and 2-1-1 Calling System could enable CofC's to further reduce fragmentation in the system of care and reduce duplication of services. The coordination of these two powerful systems will be a key factor in contributing to the congressional goal to end chronic homelessness by 2012.

For more information visit <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/hmis/index.cfm>

– Angie Baur

CAIRS Membership Application

YES! I want to be a CAIRS member. Please sign me up.

- Agency membership \$100 (please enter two names for multiple memberships)
- Individual membership \$50
- Associate membership \$25
- I *will* permit my name to be placed on a mailing list that will be offered for sale.

Name: _____

Agency: _____ Title: _____

Address: _____

City / State / Zip: _____

Telephone: (_____) _____ Fax: (_____) _____

E-mail _____ Referred by: _____

Mail this form along with your check (payable to CAIRS) to:
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www.cairs.org

Contact cairs@hotmail.org or any CAIRS board member if you have questions regarding CAIRS membership.



**California Alliance of Information
and Referral Services**

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