

CAIERS

NEWSLETTER

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CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE OF INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES

Positive Start for 2-1-1 Program

It's a known fact that the success of a good wine is best measured over time. Such is proving to be the case with the state's first 2-1-1 program, which was launched on February 11 in Ventura County. Interface Children Family Services is the information and referral provider in Ventura County. Working in a partnership with United Way – with terrific support from the county's First 5 Commission and the private sector – Interface converted its long-standing Helpline service to 2-1-1.

By all accounts, the early measurement of success for 2-1-1 Helpline has been outstanding. According to Elaine Martinez-Curry, 2-1-1 Helpline Director, call volume during the first week following the program's launch averaged 60 calls per day compared to the pre-launch call volume daily average of 35 to 38 calls. In the second week following the launch the numbers jumped again to 65 calls per day, while in the third week the average was 69 calls per day. While the average dropped back slightly to 50 daily calls in the fourth week of service, 2-1-1 Helpline partners were hardly sounding the alarm. Both United Way and Interface pointed to extensive public support and media attention prior to the launch as reasons for the early spike in call volume average.

Prior to the launch all of the county's City Councils and the Board of Supervisors proclaimed February "2-1-1 Month in Ventura County." In addition, local newspapers, talk radio shows and cable

television outlets provided important support for the 2-1-1 launch. Also, nearly 200 community, civic and business leaders attended a United Way-sponsored cocktail reception designed to highlight the importance of 2-1-1.

Since the launch, both Interface and United Way have made numerous service club, business and governmental agency presentations focused on 2-1-1. Posters and fliers promoting the value of 2-1-1 (printed in both English and Spanish) have been circulated throughout the county and are beginning to take their places on human resource and lunchroom bulletin boards at businesses and companies throughout Ventura County. In addition, newspaper advertisements designed to educate the community about 2-1-1 service are appearing in the county's largest daily newspaper and soon will appear in two weekly Spanish-language newspapers.

Most noteworthy to this point, said Martinez-Curry, are the types of calls 2-1-1 operators are now receiving. "People are asking us how to go about applying for car and health insurance," she said. "We have had calls from people who do not know how to qualify for disaster assistance from the heavy rains we have had, and from a lot of agriculture workers who have lost their jobs and need employment and financial assistance. We are also seeing an increase in calls from seniors. One caller said 800 numbers can be intimidating for seniors to call. 2-1-1 is not intimidating."

(continued on page 5)

2-1-1 Celebration in Orange County

On February 11, 2005 the Hard Rock Cafe in Newport Beach was rocking with enthusiastic support in celebration of the nationally recognized 2-1-1 Day. Fabulous food, entertainment, and a silent auction were enjoyed by all.

More than 130 friends and supporters joined Info Link Orange County, the lead entity designated as Orange County's 2-1-1 Provider, for this special evening. Key specialized information and referral providers who will be providing specialized support to Info Link Orange County were recognized. The honorable Assembly Member Todd Spitzer presented recognition plaques to Children's Home Society of California; Volunteer Center Orange County; the Office of Aging, County of Orange; and the Dayle McIntosh Center. SBC and Wells Fargo were recognized for their sponsorship contributions. 2-1-1 is expected to launch in Orange County in July of this year.

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Friends:

For the past four years, CAIRS has focused much of its efforts towards the implementation of a 2-1-1 system for California. Ventura County's February 11 launch of its 2-1-1 service represents a successful precursor to the much anticipated Southern California multi-county launch expected in July 2005.

Nonetheless, our commitment to providing training opportunities throughout the state continues to be an ongoing priority and we hope to see you at our upcoming regional conference in Sacramento in May. Sessions will cover the I&R/I&A basics, database management, crisis intervention, and disaster preparedness. Disaster preparedness will be the theme of the annual conference in San Diego planned for September.

Disaster preparedness is relevant not only for 2-1-1 providers but for all agencies that provide services to vulnerable populations such as seniors, people with disabilities, single parents and others with special needs. It is important for service agencies to know who they can turn to, or to whom they can direct their clients in the event of a disaster that threatens life and/or property. Additionally, everyone should be personally prepared to help themselves if basic utilities are unavailable and transportation routes are impeded or if they become trapped in a damaged building. Being prepared is the key, and as service providers to people who will turn to us for assistance during and after a disaster, it is important to prepare our agencies and staff to be safe and be ready to assist others.

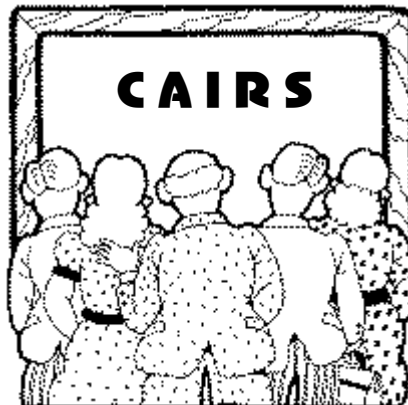
There are many agencies in the public and non-profit sectors, as well as in the faith-based community, that are designated and prepared to respond in the event of a disaster. Do you know who they are and what their role is? Did you know that there is a network of agencies in your community known as VOAD's (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster) that serve as a point of communication during disaster response and that conduct training exercises every year? Do you have communication with your local municipal and county emergency responders so that your agency can get the information it needs to help clients who call you for assistance? Do you know the role of the Federal Emergency Management Agency? Does your building have the necessary equipment and supplies to accommodate the continued operation of services or safe evacuation of staff?

CAIRS wants to ensure that its members are well informed and understand the landscape of local emergency disaster response. We also welcome any presentations on your agency's emergency response expertise and/or experience that you can share with the membership in order to build capacity for other agencies. Visit our website at www.CAIRS.org for more information about our conferences and CAIRS membership and join me in congratulating and celebrating those agencies preparing to launch 2-1-1 service in July!

– Maribel Marin, CAIRS President

CAIRS Member Survey...Coming Soon

CAIRS wants your ideas and input about the services and information you need and want. Look for the member survey in your e-mail during April. For more information on membership and member benefits, check the CAIRS website at www.cairs.org.



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Please contact CAIRS if you wish to reprint any part of this newsletter.

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Taxonomy Web Site Launched

The long awaited Taxonomy Web site has been launched and is now being used by grateful subscribers. Many check it every day to see whether that elusive term they cannot find in their own database is now available as a new term, or just to browse through the changes and additions to see what is new. Others went immediately to the download section to get the files they need to update their database. We haven't heard of anyone printing their own copy of the "book" with all the new terms, but the capability is there – in a wide variety of formats. Many new users headed to the Library section to read articles on how to use the Taxonomy as an indexing system or to learn the impact of a large update on their database. All who have contacted us at INFO LINE of Los Angeles have been thrilled!

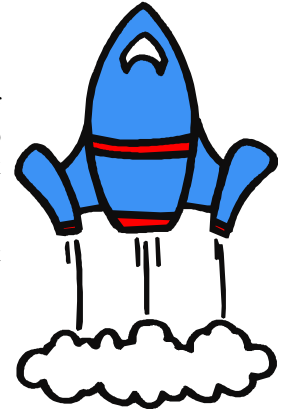
The new Web site is also supporting a newly funded project to "Canadianize" the Taxonomy – create a version that contains Canadian-specific variants for U.S. programs such as TANF and Medicare; update definitions to reference "provincial" in addition to "state;" and generally ensure that the Taxonomy works equally well in both countries. We have conducted "chef's tours" of the Web site for a wide variety of Canadian dignitaries including professional librarians. We were quite gratified to hear that the Taxonomy meets even the most stringent of standards for classification structures. Watch for improvements that arise from this project in the weeks and months to come. We update the site at least monthly and sometimes more frequently than that, so there will almost always be something new to see.

We have also learned that many people have not discovered the wonders of searching the Taxonomy using the Web site. You can do a keyword search, pick a record to display and from the record, jump to the place of the term in the hierarchy, display records for terms that are see also references, look at terms connected to related concepts (previously, appendices in the books) and see what other Taxonomy terms are connected to terms in the external systems to which the Taxonomy is cross-

walked. You can cruise around in the Taxonomy for hours, jumping from one term to all those that are related. Try it – it is fun. Georgia will be doing a demonstration of all these wonderful features at the AIRS conference in Tucson in June. Be sure to "take the tour" with Georgia if you are going to be there.

Even if you are not a subscriber, you can see much of the functionality on the site. You can't download or print anything, and you are limited to 10 items when you do searches or look at related concepts, but most of the contents of the library are available to guests and you can read comments by long-time Taxonomy users. Simply go to www.211taxonomy.org and take a look.

– Georgia Sales, INFO LINE of Los Angeles



MORE WEB SITES FOR I&R PROGRAMS

- 1. Senior Navigator Web Site:** <http://seniornavigator.com/> A good example of a specialized Web site for older adults. Has resource information for Virginia which includes a searchable database accessed by topic and related articles and a links library that accompany search results. The site feels a bit cluttered, but is easy to use and has great information.
- 2. National Association of State Units on Aging (NASUA) Web Site:** <http://nasua.org/> A must for specialized I&R programs in the aging area. Includes a resource room, a links library, a repository of presentations from the National I&R Symposium held in conjunction with the AIRS conference, a professional development resource section which includes a CIRS-A online study guide based on aging competencies and a variety of technical assistance materials and best practices documents from peers around the country.
- 3. National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities:** <http://nichcy.org/> A great site for information about disabilities. Has an A-Z topics list, research information, publications, FAQs, state resources and information about IDEA, our nation's special education law.
- 4. Points of Light Foundation Web Site:** <http://www.pointsoflight.org/> A key Web site for I&Rs interested in volunteer opportunities and volunteering. Includes a national list of volunteer centers, a description of national network, a list of national volunteer programs, a resource center and more.
- 5. American Association of Suicidology:** <http://www.suicidology.org/> A must Web site for I&R programs interested in suicide prevention and crisis intervention. Includes information about suicide, prevention and treatment sections, a list of crisis centers, a list of support groups, information for survivors, a bookstore and a links library.

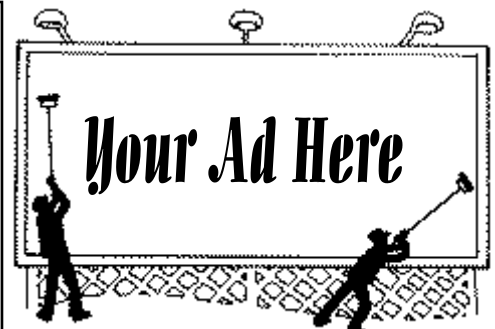
Reach a Statewide Audience with CAIRS

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. 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 contact Barbara Bernstein at (510) 537-2710, ext. 8; or by email: bbernstein@edenir.org





Southern California Training

A big "THANK YOU" goes out from CAIRS to the Riverside County Office on Aging who hosted the Southern California Training held on March 6, 2005. The event was a success by all accounts with 32 attendees and 5 testing for certification. One certification candidate came all the way from Montana!

This was the first training held in the "Inland Empire" in many years. Agencies represented were Area Agency on Aging; Dept of Aging & Adult Services; Community Rehab Services, Inc.; InfoLine of San Diego; Infolink Orange County; Inland Empire/United Way; LA Area Agency on Aging; Rolling Start; Share; and Tulare HHSA. Cities represented were: El Centro, Yucca Valley, Barstow Victorville, Ontario, Redlands, San Bernardino, Fontana, Hesperia, Los Angeles, San Diego, Costa Mesa, Rancho Cucamonga, Santa Ana, and Tulare County.

Those who attended chose from the core I&R and I&A trainings to sessions on Handling Crisis Calls and Personal Disaster Preparedness. One of the final sessions was a panel of people involved in 2-1-1 including staff from Interface of Ventura who related stories from their live 2-1-1 experience, having brought 2-1-1 online on February 11, 2005. Their phone service was particularly vital since Ventura County was one of the locations where the recent rains caused fatal mudslides.

Here are some quotes from the training evaluations: "Great, Great, Great!" "Very impressed with presenters and efficiently organized." "Excellent information given." "I enjoyed meeting others in the I&R field."

Our next Training will be held on May 13, 2005 in Sacramento. And don't forget our Annual Conference in San Diego this September.

– Gary Madden, Inland Empire United Way 2-1-1 Director



Southern California 2-1-1 providers and potential providers share insights and successes.



CAIRS Board Members prepare for registration at the Riverside Regional Training.

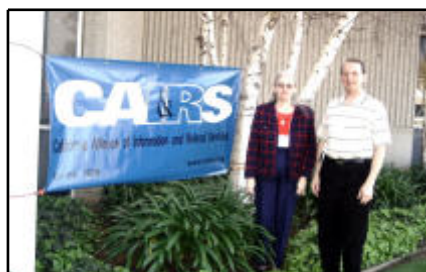


Attendees listen intently as Sara Matta discusses lessons learned from the October 2003 firestorm.



I&A specialists learn valuable skills.

Board members Anne Stundahl and Gary Madden show off the new CAIRS banner.



Federal 2-1-1 Legislation Re-introduced

The Calling for 2-1-1 Act (S 211 and HR 896), led by Senators Dole (R-NC), Clinton (D-NY), and Burr (R-NC), and Representatives Bilirakis (R-FL) and Eshoo (D-CA), was re-introduced in Congress in February, 2005. The new bill authorizes \$150 million per year for two years and \$100 million per year for three years to help implement and sustain 2-1-1 nationwide. States would be required to provide a 50 percent match.

The earlier version of the Calling for 2-1-1 Act (HR 3111 and S 1630) received more than 160 co-sponsors. Twenty-four were California legislators. Unfortunately, the legislation was not heard before the closing of the two-year Congressional session and died in committee. The following California legislators supported last year's version of the Calling for 2-1-1 Act:

Rep. Howard L. Berman, CA 28
 Rep. Mary Bono, CA 45
 Rep. Lois Capps, CA 23
 Rep. Dennis A. Cardoza, CA 18
 Rep. Randy Cunningham, CA 50
 Rep. Susan A. Davis, CA 53
 Rep. Anna Eshoo, CA 14
 Rep. Bob Filner, CA 51
 Rep. Jane Harman, CA 36
 Rep. Michael M. Honda, CA 15
 Rep. Barbara Lee, CA 9
 Rep. Tom Lantos, CA 12
 Rep. Zoe Lofgren, CA 16
 Rep. Doris O. Matsui, CA 5
 Rep. Juanita Millender-McDonald, CA 37
 Rep. George Miller, CA 7
 Rep. George P. Radanovich, CA 19
 Rep. Loretta Sanchez, CA 47

Rep. Adam B. Schiff, CA 29
 Rep. Brad Sherman, CA 27
 Rep. Diane E. Watson, CA 33
 Rep. Henry A. Waxman, CA 30
 Sen. Barbara Boxer
 Sen. Dianne Feinstein

The following California Legislators did NOT sign-up to be co-sponsors of the Calling for 2-1-1 Act:

Rep. Joe Baca, CA 43
 Rep. Xavier Becerra, CA 31
 Rep. Ken Calvert, CA 44
 Rep. Jim Costa, CA 20
 Rep. Christopher Cox, CA 48
 Rep. John Doolittle, CA 4
 Rep. David Dreier, CA 26
 Rep. Sam Farr, CA 17
 Rep. Elton Gallegly, CA 24
 Rep. Wally Herger, CA 2
 Rep. Duncan Hunter, CA 52
 Rep. Darrell Issa, CA 49
 Rep. Jerry Lewis, CA 41
 Rep. Daniel Lungren, CA 3
 Rep. Buck McKeon, CA 25
 Rep. Hilda Solis, CA 32
 Rep. Gary Miller, CA 42
 Rep. Grace Napolitano, CA 38
 Rep. Devin Nunes, CA 21
 Rep. Nancy Pelosi, CA 8
 Rep. Richard Pombo, CA 11
 Rep. Dana Rohrabacher, CA 46
 Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard, CA 34
 Rep. Ed Royce, CA 40
 Rep. Linda Sanchez, CA 39
 Rep. Fortney Pete Stark, CA 13
 Rep. Ellen Tauscher, CA 10
 Rep. Bill Thomas, CA 22
 Rep. Mike Thompson, CA 1

Rep. Maxine Waters, CA 35
 Rep. Lynn Woolsey, CA 6

Since the reintroduction of the legislation, Representative Waxman, Representative Eshoo and Senator Boxer have signed on again this year as co-sponsors representing California. The need to secure more members of Congress is imperative to move the bill through this year's Congressional session. **Please contact your local members of Congress to urge their support of the legislation.** Here are two ways you can contact your Senator or Representative:

1) Call the D.C. office of your member of Congress and ask to speak with the staff person who handles health and human services. Tell him/her you support the bill and are asking the Congress member to become a co-sponsor.

2) Send letters to the local offices of your Members of Congress or find easy-to-fill out e-mail letters you can send directly to your Members of Congress by going to www.211.org and clicking on "Get Involved." (Due to post-September 11 security restrictions, U.S. postal mail to members of Congress is severely delayed. Letters to the local office are preferable.)

The Calling for 2-1-1 Act is critical legislation and the urging of support could not be timelier. Without federal government support, 2-1-1 service will have trouble being sustainable. The legislation would bring tax dollars back to California in support of this important service and would help speed the arrival of 2-1-1 in our state.

– Sara Matta, INFO LINE San Diego

Start for 2-1-1 *(from page 1)*

Calls to 2-1-1 Helpline are covering the broad spectrum of needs in the community, with mental health/counseling calls heading the list, followed by homeless/housing, domestic violence and basic needs calls. The nature of calls has varied. For example, 2-1-1 Helpline used its language interpreter service to assist in giving driving directions to a caller, and helped another caller who was trying to find out how to obtain a dog license. On a more serious note, the service provided critical rental assistance support to a caller who has cancer, and assisted a housebound senior in need of Life Alert information.

An interesting call came from a caller who stated that a relative had been experiencing bone and stomach pain and a high fever for three days from what the caller "thinks was a large mosquito bite," raising the fear of West Nile Virus. The caller reported there were no screens on their windows, the landlord wouldn't fix them, and there were many mosquitoes in the house. The caller was advised by 2-1-1 to go to the emergency room and to call Public Health that day, in addition to receiving a number to call for tenant dispute issues.

Ventura County's 2-1-1 Helpline program has a trained staff that includes 11 full-time employees and six volunteers.

According to Martinez-Curry it has been gratifying that staff members have received several post-launch callbacks from individuals who just wanted to thank 2-1-1 for this new service.

Speaking on behalf of United Way, Michael L. Silacci, chairman of the Board of Directors of United Way of Ventura County said, "When we agreed to become a partner in this important program we knew that 2-1-1 would provide both immediate and long-term value in our community. Thus far, 2-1-1 has more than met our expectations."

David M. Smith, President & CEO, United Way of Ventura County

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Angie Baur

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Letters to the Editor

As always, the Board of Directors is looking for your input. You can provide feedback and comments by contacting the Editor, Barbara Bernstein [see above for contact information].



CAIRS

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

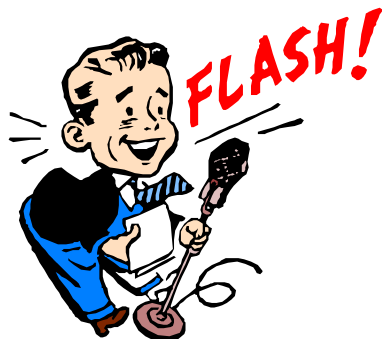
In order to achieve the Mission and Vision, the following goals have been established:

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.



Important Study of Benefits and Costs of 2-1-1 Useful to Local Efforts

United Way of America released a major study exploring the benefits and costs of a national 2-1-1 system. The study, conducted by the Ray Marshall Center at the University of Texas at Austin, estimates that a national 2-1-1 system would provide a net benefit to society of \$130 million in the first year alone and a conservative estimate of \$1.1 billion over ten years.

The study provides a review of the benefits, both quantifiable and non-quantifiable, of a national 2-1-1 system for individual users, local I&R centers and service providers, employers, taxpayers, and society as a whole. Costs are estimated under a variety of scenarios. The study also includes results from useful surveys of people who have called 2-1-1. <http://www.211.org/news.html>

California Statewide Planning for 2-1-1 Moving Ahead

The 2-1-1 California Partnership continues progress toward its vision of a 2-1-1 system serving all Californians. In February and March, staff reached out to 2-1-1 leaders in 14 counties that will launch in 2005 or 2006. The gathered information will be combined with the results of an online survey of CAIRS members to update our knowledge of 2-1-1 efforts throughout the state.

In addition, all United Ways of California received an online survey with updates of 2-1-1 progress statewide; 18 of 39 shared information on efforts in their own communities. Long term partnerships with California Health and Human Services, California Office of Emergency Services, and First 5 California are providing fruitful discussions addressing each organization's major 2-1-1 questions and concerns related to their specific internal goals.

Statewide Planning Process for 2-1-1 Created

The statewide planning process is an all-out effort focused toward the ultimate goal of creating a statewide 2-1-1 business plan. The 2-1-1 California Partnership, made up of CAIRS and United Ways of California, has created an open, engaged process for developing this unique plan. There is a path for anyone interested in the project to add his/her voice and make a difference:

- **A Stakeholder Group** of statewide leaders will bring together diverse perspectives to share input on the vision for the statewide system, its services, service delivery model, and organizational framework; group members will participate in a half-day retreat on April 25 and a full-day meeting in June.
- Five **Regional Meetings** in May will allow county-level leaders to shape the statewide plan in a way that supports local interests; discussions will address the overall vision for the statewide system, and the service delivery model; participants will be invited through local 2-1-1 leaders; dates will be published soon.
- **Advisory Groups** will provide detailed input from those who know best the details of 2-1-1 operations in areas including the cost of service, fund development, quality assurance, databases, technology and telecommunication, and marketing; work will take place via email and teleconferences.

CAIRS Keeps You Informed!

In the coming weeks, the CAIRS website will be updated with all statewide planning information. Go to www.cairs.org and click on 211 to see the latest. If you would like to participate in any of these activities or have questions about the California 2-1-1 Partnership, please contact Elizabeth Sadlon at sadlon@mindspring.com.

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:
CAIRS • 17853 Santiago Blvd., Ste. 107-349, Villa Park, CA 92861
www.cairs.org

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



**California Alliance of Information
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