

MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA OF NORTH DAKOTA'S 2-1-1 PROGRAM

This memorandum provides information regarding the history, budget, accessibility, and participation of the Mental Health America of North Dakota's 2-1-1 program.

The Bismarck call center had one telephone call in 2007 that related to the alternatives-to-abortion program. The Fargo FirstLink center had no calls related to the program.

2-1-1 PROGRAM HISTORY

In July 2000 the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) reserved the 211 dialing code for community and referral services. The FCC intended the 211 code to be a universally recognized number that would connect callers with appropriate government agencies and community-based organizations. General referrals would be used to provide resources for basic human needs, work support, children and family support, emergency suicide prevention, support for older Americans and persons with disabilities, and disaster response.

In September 2003 the North Dakota Public Service Commission issued an order allowing Mental Health America of North Dakota (MHAND) to use the 211 dialing code. Mental Health America of North Dakota was the only entity that requested use of the 211 dialing code in North Dakota. The authorization for use of the dialing code does not have an ending date and is only revocable by action of the Public Service Commission. In March 2007 the Public Service Commission issued an order that allowed MHAND to subcontract with FirstLink of Fargo to provide 2-1-1 services for calls that originate in Cass County, North Dakota, and Clay County, Minnesota. A timeline of the North Dakota 2-1-1 program history is attached as [Appendix A](#).

PROGRAM BUDGET AND FUNDING

For calendar year 2007, the total budget of the 2-1-1 program was \$188,938. Of this amount, \$159,555 was for employee salaries and \$29,383 was for operating costs, equipment, and other expenses. The 2007 budget information for the program is attached as [Appendix B](#).

Program funding is provided from donations, grants, fundraisers, memberships, and state programs. In 2007 state agencies paid a total of \$25,126 to the 2-1-1 program. The following table details the 2007 amounts paid by state agencies:

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| State Department of Health - Early childhood comprehensive systems | \$3,000 |
| Department of Human Services - Temporary assistance for needy families | 12,450 |
| Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation - Victims of crime support | 9,676 |
| Total | \$25,126 |

Currently, the alternatives-to-abortion program pays MHAND \$450 per month to provide alternatives-to-abortion program information. In addition, the program paid a one-time fee of \$3,000 to MHAND to provide listings on its website for providers of alternatives-to-abortion services. A summary of funding received by MHAND in 2007 for the alternatives-to-abortion program is attached as [Appendix C](#).

PROGRAM ACCESSIBILITY AND STATISTICS

The 2-1-1 program is accessible to all landline and cell phone users in the state. During 2007 a total of 7,921 2-1-1 calls were placed to the call center in Bismarck and 7,888 calls were placed to the Fargo FirstLink center. The following table summarizes the types of calls received at each center for 2007:

| | Bismarck Call Center ¹ | Fargo FirstLink Center ² |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Basic human needs (medical, housing, food, transportation, etc.) | 4,637 | 3,389 |
| Mental health/substance abuse | 2,376 | 1,295 |
| Suicide-related | 210 | 57 |
| Gambling | 158 | 11 |
| Other/miscellaneous | 540 | 3,136 |
| Total | 7,921 | 7,888 |

¹Effective April 1, 2007, calls originating in Cass County were directed to the Fargo FirstLink call center.

²Includes calls from Cass County, North Dakota, and Clay County, Minnesota. In addition to the 2-1-1 number, FirstLink also has a standard number for users to call.

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