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2-1-1- call volume increased from 382,760 in 2007 to 546,119 calls in 2008.

Cell phone access to 2-1-1 continues to be available in to callers utilizing the following providers: Verizon Wireless, Alltel, T-Mobile, Nextel/Sprint, AT&T/Cingular and Centennial Wireless, and Metro PCS significantly expanding the reach of 2-1-1.

Quality and Coordination

Michigan 2-1-1 developed and implemented an endorsement process in August 2006 to ensure that new 2-1-1 call centers and counties served be part of a Statewide coordinated 2-1-1 system. The endorsement process builds upon the existing quality assurances established by the Michigan Telecommunications Act, Section 214 requiring 2-1-1's to be accredited by the Alliance of Information Systems. Accreditation requires barrier free, 24X7 service by trained and certified staff. In addition, quality assurance protocols are required, and Michigan's 2-1-1 Call Centers enjoy high customer satisfactions rankings (96.76%).

2-1-1 Investment

Michigan 2-1-1 continues to seek funding from all available sources, both public and private in order to meet its goal of building sustained and predictable funding for the entire 2-1-1 system. Local 2-1-1 call center investment combined with central operations in 2008 was \$4,200,000. Michigan 2-1-1 central coordination made up \$214,000 of this total statewide investment. Michigan 2-1-1 is working to secure funding for its operations from a multitude of private and public sources, including local and state government agencies.

In 2008, Michigan 2-1-1 completed its first demonstration project with the Michigan Department of Human Services. The second year of this project was completed on June 30, 2009. Consumers Energy has invested in Michigan 2-1-1 to support the statewide buildout of 2-1-1 availability.

Organizational Advancements

Michigan 2-1-1 was incorporated on August 19, 2004 and was incorporated as a wholly owned subsidiary of the Michigan Association of United Ways in August 2006. Three new members were added to the Michigan 2-1-1 Board in November 2007 expanding governance to include stakeholders beyond 2-1-1 call center interests. Michigan 2-1-1 also established the 2-1-1 Operating Council and statewide system development taskforces in 2007 adding to the statewide bodies listed below. All of this is evidence of ongoing progress to continually improve 2-1-1 delivery as a seamless statewide service for Michigan's residents.

Michigan 2-1-1 Operating Council

The Michigan 2-1-1 Operating Council was established in August 2006 by the Michigan 2-1-1 Board according to the Michigan 2-1-1 Business Plan. Comprised of Call Center directors representing identified regional call centers and representatives of the Resource Managers Workgroup, the Council addresses the day-to-day operations of Michigan's 2-1-1 system. Their initial focus was on identifying processes for the collection and sharing of statewide data, emergency preparedness, and consistent call center operations. The Operating Council works collaboratively on several statewide information and referral access programs such as Mentor Michigan, Earned Income Tax Credit (in collaboration with the Department of Human Services),

the Michigan Participation Project, and Mortgage Foreclosure Assistance (in collaboration with the Statewide Mortgage Foreclosure Taskforce). During the recent H1N1 (swine flu) event, 2-1-1 was utilized by the Department of Community Health as the number to call for flu information.

Resource Managers Workgroup

The Resource Managers Workgroup comprised of Resource Managers from 2-1-1 Call Centers, comprehensive and specialized I & Rs, have been meeting monthly for over four years and receives oversight from the Michigan 2-1-1 Operating Council. Their mission is to ensure the quality of Michigan's resource databases, standardize taxonomy indexing, prioritize the scope of records, standardize record structure and content, develop and implement a standardization process that meets defined quality assurance criteria practices as outlined by MI-AIRS and AIRS, support and network with fellow resource managers. The Workgroup has made substantial progress toward their mission and has also provided capacity to other MI 2-1-1 workgroups.

After-Hours Taskforce

This Taskforce is charged to look at after-hours 2-1-1 service delivery and standardization of contractual agreements, as it relates to implementation of the Michigan 2-1-1 Business Plan. Currently, the Taskforce is in the process of defining quality indicators and service efficiencies. Serving on the Taskforce are representatives from 2-1-1 Call Centers and Crisis Call Centers.

Statewide Database Project & Taskforce

The Statewide Database Project has transitioned over the past years to a collaboration that now includes Dow Chemical Corporation. Dow Chemical Corporation has committed to leveraging their vendor partners to provide database and telecommunication support to Michigan 2-1-1, beginning with a five-county 2-1-1 Call Center to be based in Midland. Currently in beta-testing, a new software platform has been developed to help expand the flexibility of 2-1-1 call centers, to advance the use of newer technologies, and to facilitate a statewide 2-1-1 database. A taskforce to plan for a web presence of the database has been formed. Also being piloted is a hosted telecommunications system that is able to be used to connect all of Michigan's Call Centers, offering increased functionality and interoperability. Adoption of this telecommunications system is dependent upon adequate funding to do so.

Emergency Preparedness Taskforce

Comprised of state government representatives from the Department of Community Health (DCH) and Michigan State Police (MSP), AT&T, and Michigan 2-1-1 Regional Call Center directors, this group is looking at ways that the Michigan 2-1-1 system can be used during times of disaster and emergency. The Taskforce is developing statewide 2-1-1 protocols which identify the use of 2-1-1 in an emergency or disaster. In 2007, Michigan 2-1-1 was identified in the MSP Emergency Public Information Plan as providing the call center function. A curriculum of the Federal Emergency Management Agency training courses have been identified for completion by Michigan 2-1-1 Call Center staff in 2008. Two of Michigan's largest 2-1-1 Call Centers (Kent County and Southeastern Michigan) have established mutual aid agreements to ensure 2-1-1 availability in times of emergency or disaster. In spring, 2009, 2-1-1 was promoted

to the public by the Department of Community Health and on the Michigan.gov website as the number to call for up-to-date, accurate information on the H1N1 situation.

How State Departments Could Use 2-1-1

Status since 2006 2-1-1 Study

The 2006 2-1-1 report to Michigan's Legislature cited over 700 toll-free telephone lines maintained by state agencies for public access to governmental services and information (see appendix A). These numbers remain operational; the content of the 2006 report accurately reflects today's use of 800 lines, health and human service databases, and outreach efforts by state departments.

While we know that additional 800 numbers and community resource databases have been implemented since the 2006 Study, we are convinced that most of the departments are unaware of the potential to use 2-1-1 and specifically unaware of the 2005 Michigan Telecommunications Act (MTA), Section 214: (6) "Before a state agency or local unit of government implements a community resource information or referral service, the state agency or local unit of government shall consult with the state 2-1-1 coordinating agency designated by the commission under subsection (5)"

Since the MTA re-write does not affect most agencies, an effort should be made to create awareness of it. DIT will make 2-1-1 information available to the appropriate individuals of each agency along with language from the MTA rewrite Section 214. This will increase awareness of opportunities for coordinated use of 2-1-1 for 800 help lines and community resource databases across state departments. It will provide state agencies with contact information for Michigan 2-1-1, the coordinating agency designated by the Michigan Public Service Commission.

2-1-1 potential to increase capacity

- Because of the state's economic challenges, many Michiganders are seeking health and human service support for the first time. 2-1-1 can efficiently guide these people through the social service maze and connect them with needed supports. It can provide state worker relief to local DHS offices by offloading inappropriate / ineligible calls for assistance, prescreening callers for public benefits, and providing information about how to apply for benefits and tax credits. 2-1-1 can provide outreach on new ARRA benefits for Michiganders.
- Given the progress of the database and the needs of Michigan families, now is the time for the state to partner with 2-1-1 in making the 2-1-1 database easily accessible for all. A statewide 2-1-1 database could be leveraged by the state on a heavily promoted state website providing one-stop-shop assistance linking families to all public, nonprofit and faith based health and human services. Since Michigan's 2-1-1 database is continually updated, it provides a sustainable solution for the state to provide high quality comprehensive health and human service resource information.
- With adequate funding, MSHDA could use 2-1-1 as its number for Save the Dream foreclosure prevention campaign.

- 2-1-1 could provide outreach and a single-stop-shop for implementation of energy efficiency and weatherization programs.
- To support the Department of Corrections Michigan Prisoner Reentry (MPRI) goal to reduce crime and enhance public safety by implementing a seamless system of service for offenders through their transition, community reintegration and aftercare in their communities, Michigan 2-1-1 can support staff and end users with timely community resource information. Wayne County MPRI currently utilizes 2-1-1 for this purpose.

What Departments Have Utilized 2-1-1 to Date

EITC 2-1-1 demonstration project

Michigan 2-1-1, in partnership with the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) and Community Actions Agencies throughout Michigan promoted 2-1-1 as an entry to information about the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) program, the preparation of tax forms at no cost, and the creation of volunteer opportunities related to the preparation of EITC forms. The Earned Income Tax Program is meant to help return dollars to those individuals who are “low-income” according to Federal Guidelines. Money returned to taxpayers can then be used to address critical needs and issues that individuals/families may be experiencing.

Millions of these federal dollars have gone unclaimed and more importantly, not spent in our communities because low-income Michigan wage earners have not made application for them. Many of these wage earners have no knowledge of the Earned Income Tax Program and are not aware if they are eligible for EITC assistance including free tax preparation services. The expected outcome of the 2-1-1 demonstration project is that individuals accessing these additional resources to address their own individual needs will become more self sufficient as they spend those resources within the community.

Michigan 2-1-1 collaborated with the Accounting Aid Society (AAS), American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the Statewide Earned Income Tax Credit Coalition, Community Action Agencies and other local resources to populate the Michigan 2-1-1 databases with up-to-date, accurate information about the availability of tax preparation sites for low-income Michigan wage earners. Updates on these tax preparation sites were provided daily to the call centers during the tax preparation season. Four hundred seventy-four tax preparation sites were maintained within the 2-1-1 database with detail on location, hours of operation, etc. A toll-free number to access EITC information through a 2-1-1 Call Center was used by unserved counties.

DHS and the Bureau of Community Action and Economic Opportunity collaborated with Michigan 2-1-1 to promote 2-1-1. Utilizing the formal DHS channels of communication (L-Letter) increased knowledge of 2-1-1 as a resource for low-income wage-earners.

Michigan 2-1-1 developed EITC call handling protocol as well as EITC call specialist training. The call training was uploaded to the Michigan 2-1-1 / Michigan AIRS Training Website for use by Michigan 2-1-1 Call Specialists. It included information about the federal EITC, the new state EITC as well as the Child Tax and Home Heating Credit. Following the training, Call Specialists were required to take a test. Eighty-seven call center staff participated in training and passed the test. 2,852 callers were referred to local assets building programs in their communities to provide support for long-term financial goals.

Data was collected on every 2-1-1 caller seeking or provided with information about EITC. Monthly data reports include information on the number of callers requesting EITC volunteer

information, zip codes of these callers and the name of the agency (ies) in which the caller was referred. Following - is some of the 2008-09 data:

Number of EITC Callers	11,575
Unmet needs (could not be referred)	527
Unmet need reasons (top 3)	Over income, service unavailable, registration full
Referral source (top 3)	Repeat caller, family / friend, DHS/ agency

Forty-seven callers requested information about volunteering to become trained to assist low-income wage earners with tax preparation.

Though 2008 data on the amount of EITC refunds is not yet available, certain approximations can be made about the amount of EITC funds captured through this demonstration project. Using the 2007 average EITC refund of \$1,9757, if just 80% of callers pre-screened for eligibility for this refund completed their filings, \$18,288,500 in Federal EITC refunds would enter the Michigan economy *plus* \$1,828,850 in Michigan EITC

This can be compared to 2008 (2007 tax season) with \$6,788,477 estimated. . Callers obtaining tax site referrals from 2-1-1 also benefitted by receiving other needed referrals to health and human services.

State Police Emergency Preparedness Plan 2-1-1 inclusion

Representatives from the state and Michigan 2-1-1 are collaborating to develop procedures and protocols to incorporate the use of Michigan's statewide 2-1-1 system to supplement state and local government in providing information to the public. In the event of an emergency or disaster, 2-1-1 would be utilized as a resource to supplement the capabilities and resources held by state and/or local governments. Other states, such as California, Texas, and Florida, among others, utilize 2-1-1 as the number for the public to call for up-to-date information on disasters and emergencies.

2-1-1 has been identified as a potential "Call Center" under "Methods of Public Information Communications" in the Michigan Emergency Public Information Plan (MEPIP). 2-1-1 would fall under Information Dissemination Chief, Incoming Message Center. The plan is currently a draft document with finalization of the plan expected in the next 12-18 months. In 2007, Michigan 2-1-1 was represented during a functional exercise to test the MEPIP within a Joint Information Center (JIC) setting.

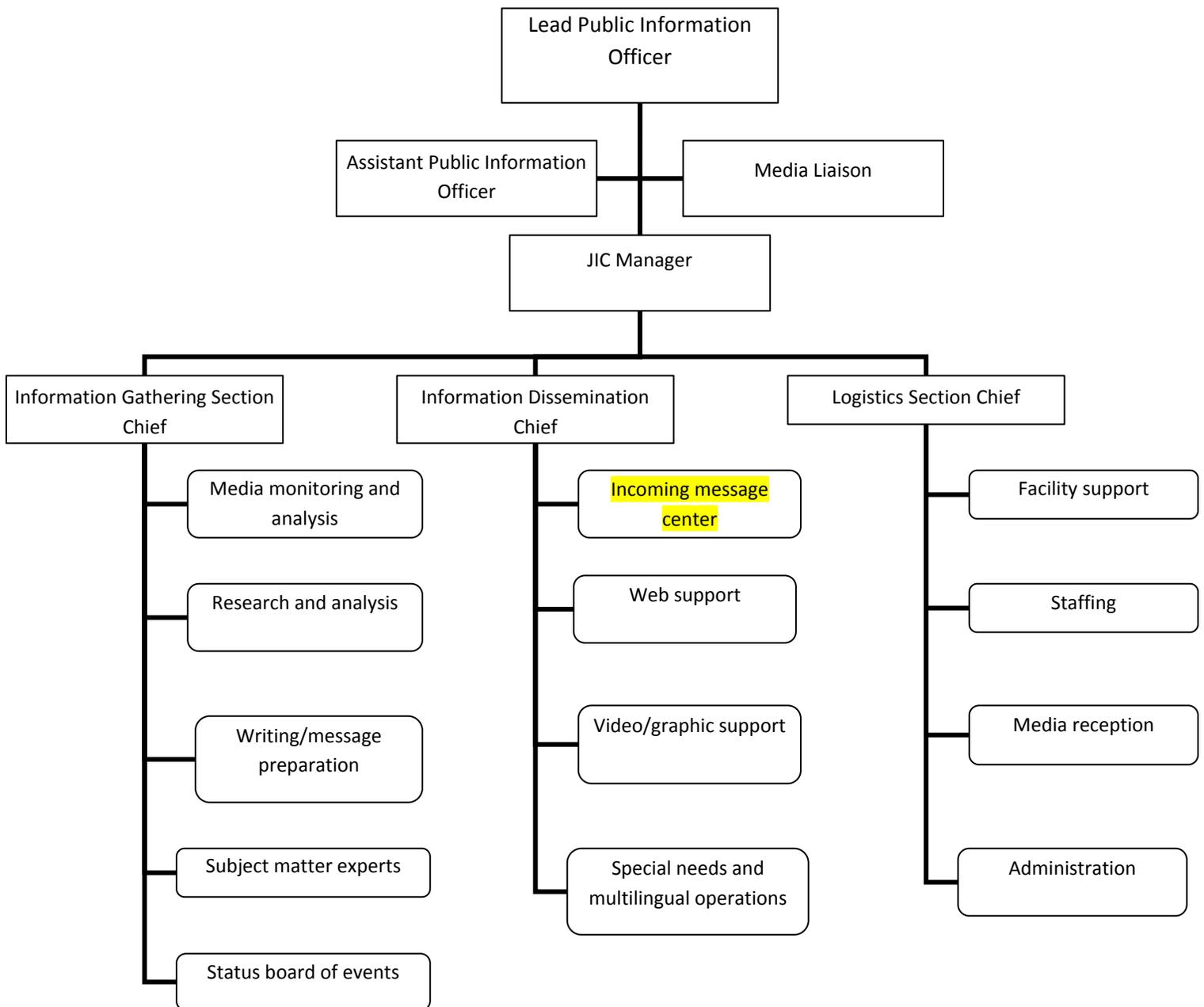
Flooding in Mason County in spring, 2008 saw Emergency Management's promotion of 2-1-1 as the number to call for up-to-date information on road closures and shelter sites.

The Michigan Department of State Police, Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division (EMHSD) hold the ultimate authority for emergency public information for the state of Michigan and the responsibility for disseminating information to protect public health and safety. Michigan 2-1-1 is deemed by the division as a highly valued resource that can be utilized at a moment's notice upon activation of the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) and/or Joint Information Center (JIC).

The utilization of 2-1-1 during times of disaster or emergency could potentially net a cost savings in time and efficiency in not having to establish a call center but to utilize 2-1-1 call center(s) and their experienced staff, available 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. Michigan 2-1-1 could also be utilized as rumor control/public inquiry and to provide information on assistance programs.

The figure below, an example from the Michigan State Police's draft Michigan Public Information Plan, identifies the need for a call center and identifies 2-1-1 as the incoming message center.

Joint Information Center



Conclusion: Achieving a Statewide 2-1-1 System

Since the Department of Information Technology's (DIT) last report in 2008, Michigan 2-1-1 has continued to increase its footprint throughout Michigan by offering coverage to more than 72% of the state. In this time frame, it has also held high quality standards and continued to expand its organizational development.

The statewide project using 2-1-1 for EITC outreach and participation demonstrated over the past two years how 2-1-1 can improve efficiency and increase the effectiveness of a state program. With increasing demands on state departments 2-1-1 should be fully leveraged to help streamline the State's current 700 plus help lines. Now, more than ever, Michigan families need to be efficiently connected with public, nonprofit and faith-based services available. This can be accomplished through coordination of the 2-1-1 phone service and incorporation of a statewide 2-1-1 database on a State of Michigan website.

DIT recognizes the need to increase awareness of the Michigan Telecommunications Act directive for the use of 2-1-1, and will spearhead communications to the appropriate people within state departments about such directive. We support working with agencies on specific projects' use of 2-1-1 phone assistance as well as community database use.

DIT believes it is important that 2-1-1 continues to move toward the goal of becoming a statewide system to effectively and efficiently serve all Michigan residents; we congratulate Michigan 2-1-1 for significant progress in achieving this goal and moving forward with continued collaboration from the state of Michigan.

Executive Summary

Introduction

In July 2000, the Federal Communications Commission assigned the three-digit dialing code 2-1-1 for the exclusive purpose of providing widespread access to community information and referral services. Once described as “elegant in its simplicity,” 2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember phone number linking callers in need to available health and human service programs and providing information important in preparing for and recovering from natural and man-made disasters. Planning for and development of 2-1-1 across the nation has been predicated on the expectation that this service will help build healthier and safer communities in a number of important ways. Today, 190 active 2-1-1 systems operate in all or part of 38 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, reaching more than 165 million Americans, over 55 percent of the United States population.

The purpose of this study is to determine the feasibility of using 2-1-1 as a means of systematically improving public access to health and human services throughout Michigan. *Michigan 2-1-1* will be a public-private partnership embodied in an independent 501(c)(3) organization governed by a board of directors representing United Ways and 2-1-1 call centers, State government, business, private philanthropy, and the community. Based on national trends, and the state’s population, the *Michigan 2-1-1* system is projected to deal with almost 800,000 calls in its third full year of operation and over 3.6 million calls over the first five years of operation. At the heart of the system will be the most comprehensive database of health and human services in the state, including thousands of entries for services and information provided by nonprofit organizations and by government at all levels. Callers will be linked to one of seven regional call centers staffed by nationally certified specialists prepared to help them define their need and connect them with the community resources available to help. The database also will be publicly accessible through the Internet.

Methods and Materials

Five research tasks were conducted: (1) a scan of the 2-1-1 environment across the nation; (2) identification of additional detail on public funding for 2-1-1 programs that are in place in a few selected states; (3) identification of current State of Michigan-supported toll-free telephone numbers and the purposes for which they are used; (4) identification of potential applications of a statewide 2-1-1 system within Michigan; and (5) an analysis of the potential benefits these applications of 2-1-1 will have for the State of Michigan, if and when fully established and operational throughout the state.

Internet searches were conducted to identify all 2-1-1 programs throughout the United States. Four states (Connecticut, New York, Texas, and Washington) were chosen for additional analysis regarding their current status, current features and characteristics, and, most important, sources of funding.

The Michigan Department of Information Technology provided listings of all toll-free telephone numbers that are operated by state government agencies in Michigan. These toll-free numbers were identified by governmental department and, in some cases, by the specific program or service provided. Toll-free numbers for which no stated program was provided were given to research staff who called each unidentified number in order to determine if the number was currently in service and, if so, what program or service it serves.

In addition, five Michigan state agencies (Department of Community Health, Department of Labor and Economic Growth, Department of Education, Department of Human Services, and Michigan State Police) provided extensive information about the employment of toll-free telephone lines for information and referral (I&R) services for their clients along with opportunities for expanded I&R services and future applications that may benefit from the establishment of a statewide 2-1-1 system.

Findings

Data collected from the nationwide 2-1-1 database and individual state sources indicate that all 50 states as well as the District of Columbia have initiated a 2-1-1 program as of spring 2006. Seventeen states currently have 100 percent 2-1-1 coverage. Five states have at least 75 percent statewide coverage, and seven more states (including Michigan) have at least 50 percent statewide 2-1-1 coverage. Virtually all 2-1-1 programs around the nation receive their funding as a mix of federal, state, and local government funding, as well as grants and donations from corporations, foundations, agencies, businesses, nonprofits, and individuals.

According to information provided by the Michigan Department of Information Technology, more than 700 toll-free telephone lines were maintained by state agencies for public access to governmental services and information, internal communications among state government employees, and Michigan's judiciary branch of government during the first half of 2006. A number of these toll-free lines are specifically dedicated to the transmission of digital information. The greatest uses of toll-free numbers at this time include various programs and initiatives within the Department of Labor and Economic Growth (92), the Department of Human Services (86), State Police (99), and the Department of Natural Resources (98).

Opportunities in Current, Planned, and Future Programs

Much of the value of a statewide 2-1-1 system is its ability to serve as a common entry point for individuals who may have an array of needs, some of which may be served by state agencies while some may be served by other organizations or programs outside of state government. Current and future uses of toll-free access for critical information and services were identified in each of the following areas.

Department of Community Health (DCH)

- Aging and long-term care
- Mental health and substance abuse services
- Public health prevention and emergency services
- Crime victims
- Health facilities and health professions

Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG)

- Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)
- Bureau of Workforce Programs
- Michigan Commission for the Blind food stamps, transit services, and so on.
- Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns

Department of Education (MDE)

- Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services.
- MDE Databases—Project Great Start, Early-On, and Project Find

Department of Human Services (DHS)

- General information and referral services
- Prescreen callers referred to DHS for services such as Food Assistance Program, Medicaid,
- SER, and others
- Central point of contact for specific programs and services—foster care, earned income tax
- credit, food assistance, prisoner reentry, and others
- Access to faith-based and non-faith-based community programs providing emergency
- services
- A centralized point of contact for volunteers and community activities targeting those in need

Other potential benefits that may emerge from the establishment of a statewide 2-1-1 system include:

- Reduction of nonemergency calls to 9-1-1
- Reduction in the number of toll-free numbers funded by government
- Enhanced tax assistance and recovery, including the Earned Income Tax Credit
- Volunteer recruitment for nonprofits and ability for government to mobilize volunteers in times of crisis
- Savings for businesses through reduced absenteeism and increased productivity due to enhanced information on where employees can find services
- Planning information for cities and counties informed by the data collection of call volume
- and referrals for a comprehensive array of services
- A broad communication network for public dissemination of information about changes in
- federal, state, and local programs
- Cost avoidance for state and local governments of misdirected calls for services
- 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week service
- Ability to disseminate public health and crisis-preparation information

In addition, one of the most important potential features of the 2-1-1 system is that it serves as an information management tool that allows analysts to track requests for information and help on a real-time basis, thus allowing programs to identify the most common needs at any given time, pinpoint where those needs are most in demand, and determine whether those needs are being met.

Results: Possibilities and Prospects

The overall benefit of a statewide 2-1-1 system for the State of Michigan will be realized—especially for individual state government agencies—through increases in both the efficiency and effectiveness of the services they provide to Michigan residents.

- Greater efficiency will be realized by serving the public through more appropriate information requests. The 2-1-1 system will free staff to provide more services to more people.
- Greater effectiveness will be realized by performing a triage function upon public requests for services. This becomes an important benefit as the elimination of digressions and interruptions allows agencies to serve additional requests without additional staff expense, thereby increasing both effectiveness and efficiency.
- Public benefit will be realized through early intervention. As has been demonstrated for decades within the health care arena, early intervention is one of the most effective ways of preventing illness and injury.

Conclusions

As the State of Michigan moves forward with its consideration of establishing a statewide 2-1-1 I&R service, a few key conclusions emerged from this analysis that must be considered in making this determination.

1. There is considerable interest in the use of toll-free telephone communications to enhance and expand I&R services to Michigan residents in all economic and social situations, but especially to those Michigan residents who may be in need and, thus, need direction and assistance towards information and services that will help ameliorate their situations.
2. Familiarity with 2-1-1 programs is relatively high, and there is relatively broad recognition at this time that 2-1-1 has great potential to simplify and consolidate existing I&R services offered both regionally and statewide.
3. Key contacts in each of the targeted State of Michigan departments have been willing and able to assist this research project in identifying current toll-free telephone applications as well as potential applications to existing programs along with new and interesting application for I&R services.
4. The benefits to Michigan from implementation of a statewide 2-1-1 system are extensive and significant. The advantages of 2-1-1 are manifest in a variety of ways, including more efficient and effective public access to information and services; greater efficiency and local agencies to individuals and families in need; continuous availability of I&R

and effectiveness in the provision of information and the provision of services by state services 24 hours per day, 365 days per year; enhanced database resources for use by state and local health and human service providers; and resources critical for effective emergency preparedness and crisis management.

5. The impact of 2-1-1 in Michigan, while dramatic in its totality, is likely to be manifest in numerous small increments and instances over a considerable period of time rather than in one or two dramatic events.