In the matter of the application of

HEART OF WEST MICHIGAN UNITED WAY

to be assigned the telephone digits 2-1-1 and to be
designated as the community resources information
and referral answering point for Lake, Mason,
Mecosta, Newaygo, Oceana, and Osceola Counties.

Case No. U-18493

At the April 12, 2018 meeting of the Michigan Public Service Commission in Lansing, Michigan.

PRESENT: Hon. Sally A. Talberg, Chairman
Hon. Norman J. Saari, Commissioner
Hon. Rachael A. Eubanks, Commissioner

ORDER

The abbreviated dialing number 2-1-1 may be assigned by the Commission to a community resource information and referral answering point for various geographic areas within the state. MCL 484.2214. On December 21, 2017, the Heart of West Michigan United Way (HWMUW) filed an application requesting designation as the community resource information and referral answering point, and transfer of the 2-1-1 number, for certain rate centers located either entirely or primarily within Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Newaygo, Oceana, and Osceola counties. Pursuant to orders issued in Case Nos. U-15348, U-15469, and U-16787, these rate centers are currently assigned to Community Access Line of the Lakeshore, Inc. (CALL 2-1-1). HWMUW filed an amended application on January 25, 2018 (application).
HWMUW is currently designated as the community resource information and referral answering point for Kent County. September 16, 2002 order in Case No. U-13460. With this application, HWMUW seeks designation for the following 28 rate centers: Baldwin, Big Rapids, Carr, Chippewa Lake, Dublin, Evart, Fountain, Freesoil, Fremont, Hart, Hesperia, Holton, Howard City, Irons, Le Roy, Ludington, Luther, Marion, Mecosta, Morley, Newaygo, Pentwater, Reed City, Scottville, Shelby, Stanwood, Tustin, and White Cloud.

With respect to the application requirements prescribed in MCL 484.2214(3), the request for transfer included written endorsement from Michigan 2-1-1, Inc., the Michigan Alliance for Information and Referral Systems (MI-AIRS), and the combined state endorsed community collaborative bodies. In addition, the application states that services will continue to be provided 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Exhibit B to the application is a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding executed between HWMUW and CALL 2-1-1 whereby the parties agreed to transfer the exchanges. The application states that services currently provided will not be affected in any way throughout the transfer process.

On February 9, 2018, the Commission’s Executive Secretary issued a letter directing HWMUW to publish a notice of opportunity to comment in newspapers of general circulation within the counties affected by the application and to mail the notice to the Attorney General, local exchange carriers, and all human resource agencies within the counties affected by the application. HWMUW has complied with these requirements.

West Shore Educational Service District, United Way of the Lakeshore, Mecosta – Osceola United Way, and United Way of Mason County filed comments in support of the application.
The Commission finds that HWMUW’s request for transfer of rate centers should be granted. The Commission approves the transfer of the listed 28 rate centers from CALL 2-1-1 to HWMUW.

The Commission concludes that any service platform issues should initially be determined between HWMUW and the carriers, with the cost of service being a competitive issue rather than a matter subject to regulatory resolution. The Commission notes that HWMUW’s request and the MI-AIRS standards\(^1\) provide assurance that 2-1-1 callers will not be assessed toll charges. The Commission will be involved in service platform issues (such as the use of current 800 numbers) only to the extent that implementation of the 2-1-1 service requires interconnection between carriers, or the parties establish another basis for Commission jurisdiction. All carriers should note that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) requires carriers to participate in completing calls to the 2-1-1 center.\(^2\)

The Commission lacks jurisdiction under MCL 484.2401 to require payphone providers and wireless carriers to provide access to 2-1-1 service. The Commission encourages them to work with all parties to provide their customers with access to 2-1-1.

Any change to the geographic area of HWMUW’s designations requires Commission approval. Changes to the geographic area include making the assigned geographic area smaller (i.e., removal of exchanges) or larger (i.e., expansion to a regional area with additional exchanges). Modifications of the geographic area that may occur due to the assignment of the 2-1-1 dialing pattern in adjacent counties also require Commission approval.

\(^{1}\) Application for MI-AIRS endorsement as a 2-1-1 Call Center, Standard II, Requirement 2.

\(^{2}\) In the Matter of the Use of N11 Codes and Other Abbreviated Dialing Arrangements, Third Report and Order and Order on Reconsideration, CC Docket No. 92-105 (FCC 00-256), ¶ 21.
Approval of the request is provisional, due to the FCC’s ability to recall the 2-1-1 abbreviated dialing number. In addition, the Commission retains the right to withdraw its approval should the statute change. The Commission also notes that certain other circumstances could warrant rescinding the 2-1-1 assignment, such as failure to meet the MI-AIRS standards, or a change in standing with the county multipurpose collaborative bodies or Michigan 2-1-1. The approval granted by the order cannot be transferred to another entity without the Commission’s approval. The relinquishment of the 2-1-1 assignment requires Commission approval. Should HWMUW be unable to continue providing 2-1-1 service to the designated area, it shall apply to and receive approval from the Commission before discontinuing the service.

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that:

A. Heart of West Michigan United Way’s request for transfer of the 28 rate centers listed in this order from Community Access Line of the Lakeshore, Inc., is approved, and Heart of West Michigan United Way is designated the community resource information and referral answering point for the 28 exchanges in Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Newaygo, Oceana, and Osceola counties.

B. Heart of West Michigan United Way shall provide sufficient resources to operate the 2-1-1 telephone number 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

C. All providers of basic local exchange service within the exchanges identified in this order that are wholly or partially within the listed counties shall take the necessary steps to allow their customers to access the Heart of West Michigan United Way, through the use of the 2-1-1 telephone number.

3 Id.
The Commission reserves jurisdiction and may issue further orders as necessary.

Any party desiring to appeal this order must do so in the appropriate court within 30 days after issuance and notice of this order, pursuant to MCL 484.2203(12). To comply with the Michigan Rules of Court’s requirement to notify the Commission of an appeal, appellants shall send required notices to both the Commission’s Executive Secretary and to the Commission’s Legal Counsel. Electronic notifications should be sent to the Executive Secretary at mpscedockets@michigan.gov and to the Michigan Department of the Attorney General - Public Service Division at pungp1@michigan.gov. In lieu of electronic submissions, paper copies of such notifications may be sent to the Executive Secretary and the Attorney General - Public Service Division at 7109 W. Saginaw Hwy., Lansing, MI 48917.

MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Sally A. Talberg, Chairman

Norman J. Saari, Commissioner

Rachael A. Eubanks, Commissioner

By its action of April 12, 2018.

Kavita Kale, Executive Secretary