

**The Florida Senate**  
**PROFESSIONAL STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: Health Policy Committee

BILL: SB 212

INTRODUCER: Senators Lynn, Rich, and others

SUBJECT: The Florida 211 Network

DATE: March 16, 2007      REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Pardue	Skelton	MS	<b>Favorable</b>
2.	Bedford	Wilson	HP	<b>Favorable</b>
3.			CA	
4.			HA	
5.				
6.				

**I. Summary:**

This bill provides for the expansion of the human services information and referral program known as the Florida 211 Network to all counties in the state. The bill adds services to persons with disabilities and special health care needs to the program’s objectives. In addition, this bill designates the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA or agency) as the lead agency for receiving and distributing federal funds in support of the 211 Network. Finally, the bill requires funds expenditure reports from 211 Network providers to the agency and from the agency to the Governor and the presiding officers of the Legislature.

This bill appropriates \$5 million in nonrecurring general revenue to fund the statewide expansion of the 211 Network to all Florida counties and to enhance the operations of existing 211 providers. The bill also appropriates \$193,516 in recurring general revenue and \$7,830 in nonrecurring general revenue to fund three full-time equivalent positions to implement the provisions of the bill.

This bill amends s. 408.918, Florida Statutes.

**II. Present Situation:**

**Information and Referral Services**

Information and Referral (I&R) services are programs whose primary purpose is to maintain information about human service resources in the community. The I&R services link people who need assistance with appropriate service providers and supply descriptive information about the

agencies or organizations that offer such services.<sup>1</sup> These agencies or organizations offer a full array of health and human services, including economic assistance, crisis intervention, transportation, domestic violence, disability, mental health, substance abuse, child and elder care, health care and numerous other assistance services.

According to the AHCA, the funding sources for Florida's I&R organizations vary. Funds may be provided through the United Way, county and city governments, nonprofit agencies, corporations, grants, or private donations.

### **Florida's 211 Network**

On July 21, 2000, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) designated the telephone number "211" to access community I&R services nationwide. The Florida Public Service Commission determined that the FCC ruling did not confer authority to the commission to determine which organizations would be permitted to obtain the 211 telephone number.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, in 2002, the Legislature required the AHCA to develop criteria to which organizations must adhere in order to become certified Florida 211 Network providers and assigned the AHCA the responsibility to perform such certifications.<sup>3</sup> Prior to receiving certification, all candidates must be able to effectively demonstrate that their organization works collaboratively and has written agreements with specialized I&R systems including crisis centers, child care resource and referral programs, elder help-lines, homeless coalitions, designated emergency management systems, and 911 and 311 systems.<sup>4</sup>

The 2002 Legislature created the Florida Health and Human Services Access Act (ss. 408.911-408.918, F.S.) which authorized the AHCA to develop a comprehensive, automated system for access to health care services.<sup>5</sup> This system was to be implemented as a pilot project to integrate the determination of eligibility for health care services with I&R services. Under s. 408.918, F.S., the Act authorized the planning, development, and—subject to appropriations—the implementation of a statewide Florida 211 Network to provide comprehensive, cost-effective access to health and human services information.

The integrated pilot program was partially implemented using the 211 Network as the single point of entry for information and referrals to publicly funded health and human service programs. However, the 2003 Legislature did not continue funding and the pilot project, scheduled to be completed on December 31, 2003, was terminated on June 30, 2003. The 211 Network, however, has continued to operate and expand under the ACHA's oversight and the assistance of the Florida Alliance of Information and Referral Services (FLAIRS).

The Florida 211 Network Provider Certification Rule (Chapter 59G-11, Florida Administrative Code) was adopted on April 28, 2003. Under this rule, the AHCA does not have any certification applications pending and has certified 16 organizations as a Florida 211 Network provider. These

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter 59G-11, Florida Administrative Code.

<sup>2</sup> Florida Alliance of Information and Referral Services, *Florida 2-1-1 Network Business Plan*, December 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Chapter 2002-223, Laws of Florida (L.O.F.)

<sup>4</sup> Chapter 59G-11, Florida Administrative Code.

<sup>5</sup> Section 408.913, F.S.

providers are currently serving over 14.2 million people in 49 Florida counties, representing over 82.5 percent of Florida's population.<sup>6</sup>

The FLAIRS is a statewide I&R association whose members provide answers to telephone inquiries about human services. The FLAIRS has taken a leadership role in establishing the 211 Network.

### III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

This bill amends s. 408.918, F.S., as follows. The bill:

- Provides legislative findings regarding the benefit of a statewide Florida 211 Network, particularly in times of disaster.
- Establishes an objective for the Florida 211 Network to improve access to accurate local health and human services information that includes service to persons with disabilities and special health care needs.
- Designates the AHCA as the lead entity for receiving and distributing funds received from the federal government to support the Florida 211 Network.
- Requires the Florida 211 Network to be expanded to each county and provides for coordination between 211 providers and county emergency management agencies in the event of a disaster.
- Requires the AHCA to distribute appropriated funds to FLAIRS for the expansion of the Florida 211 Network statewide and to enhance operations of existing 211 providers.
- Requires the funds distributed to FLAIRS to be made available to 211 providers on a matching basis, with each 211 provider required to provide a \$1 match for each \$1 received from state funds appropriated for that purpose.
- Requires the state appropriated funds, at a minimum, to be used to achieve statewide 211 network coverage.
- Requires each 211 provider that receives funds to report its expenditure of the state funds to FLAIRS using a form developed by the AHCA, by December 15, 2007.
- Requires FLAIRS to provide a statewide report to the AHCA that includes the individual reports and aggregated data provided by the 211 providers by January 1, 2008.
- Requires the AHCA to submit a report to the Governor and the presiding officers of the Legislature detailing the expenditure of the appropriated funds by February 15, 2008.
- Defines the terms "Florida 211 Network Provider" and "211 provider" as an information and referral organization with the primary purpose of providing information on human service resources, a description about the service providers, and assistance in accessing those providers.

The bill appropriates \$5 million from nonrecurring general revenue to the AHCA for fiscal year 2007-08 to fund the statewide expansion of the Florida 211 Network and to enhance the operations of existing 211 providers. Funds that are not encumbered by June 30, 2008, may be re-appropriated for fiscal year 2008-09 for the same purposes.

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<sup>6</sup> Source: Florida Alliance for Information and Referral Services website, <http://www.flairs.org/211%20map.htm>, Revised 10/17/06. (last visited March 15, 2007)

The bill further appropriates \$193,516 in recurring general revenue funds and \$7,830 in nonrecurring general revenue funds and authorizes three full-time equivalent positions to the AHCA to implement the act.

This bill provides for an effective date upon becoming a law.

#### **IV. Constitutional Issues:**

##### **A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

The provisions of this bill have no impact on municipalities and the counties under the requirements of Article VII, Section 18 of the Florida Constitution.

##### **B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:**

The provisions of this bill have no impact on public records or open meetings issues under the requirements of Article I, Section 24(a) and (b) of the Florida Constitution.

##### **C. Trust Funds Restrictions:**

The provisions of this bill have no impact on the trust fund restrictions under the requirements of Article III, Subsection 19(f) of the Florida Constitution.

#### **V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:**

##### **A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

##### **B. Private Sector Impact:**

The FLAIRS must disburse funds to 211 providers on a \$1 for \$1 matching basis; therefore, providers willing to participate must obtain matching funds.

##### **C. Government Sector Impact:**

The sum of \$5 million in nonrecurring general revenue is appropriated to the AHCA for distribution to the FLAIRS to implement the statewide expansion of the Florida 211 Network and to enhance the operations of existing 211 providers.

Three additional full-time equivalent positions are authorized to the AHCA for the purpose of implementing the act. The sums of \$193,516 in recurring general revenue funds and \$7,830 in nonrecurring general revenue funds are appropriated to fund these positions. The AHCA has stated that the actual recurring revenue needed for these positions would be \$212,495, an additional recurring requirement of \$18,979 and the actual nonrecurring revenue needed would be \$10,400, an additional nonrecurring requirement of \$2,570. These increases are due to pay increases and additives. There is also a statutory requirement that agency staff conduct pre-certification site visits that has

not been included in previous budget proposals. This would require \$14,000 of recurring funds per year, which is included in the \$212,495.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

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This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.

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## **VIII. Summary of Amendments:**

None.

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