

## Key Messages in Talking with Members of Congress and State Legislators

Key Message #1: **2-1-1 needs to be available to all people everywhere 24 hours a day, 7 days a week so people can get the help they need in the event of a disaster or personal crisis.** This can ONLY happen if H.R.211/S.211 passes this year. Only a few months left for Congress to pass this bill that will make it possible for 2-1-1 to be available to all Americans in need.

Key Message #2: 2-1-1 has expanded rapidly since the first 2-1-1 was launched in 1997. Our early investors and champions have confidence in the power of the 2-1-1 resource to local areas, to our state, to be there when real people are struggling. **Investors and champions need and expect Congress to step up and see this resource for what it is and invest along side them.** If they don't there will be consequences for residents, families, old, young,...when expansion plans stop and future access to 2-1-1 is endangered.

Key Message #3: **Americans everywhere are struggling. Congress is looking for ways to help people NOW.** Supporting H.R.211/S.211 is one of the best ways Congress can do that. Every day, 2-1-1 gives American families facing disasters large and small somewhere to go for help. 2-1-1 answered over 16 million calls last year and the number is increasing again this year. Locally, 2-1-1 has supported families in midst of wildfires, home foreclosures, and the H1N1 scare, and has helped hundreds of first time callers who never thought they would need to ask for help.

Key Message #4: **Everyone benefits from 100% coverage.** An interconnected 2-1-1 network will allow information to be distributed in the most efficient and effective way, especially during times of crisis, like hurricanes, floods, earthquakes or worse.

Key Message #5: **H.R.211/S.211 is doable and ripe for success. It requires only a modest commitment of federal funds that will match state and private investments already in place.** Majority of members in both the House and the Senate, Democrats and Republicans, want this Act to pass which means that the majority of Americans want this bill to get done now. Every member needs to help our members of Congress get this bill to a vote! And every member needs to hear from their constituents that we need a vote on H.R.211/ S.211 now.

### **Background about 2-1-1**

- Just as 9-1-1 connects callers with emergency services, **2-1-1 connects people to important human services from a range of private nonprofits, government and faith-based agencies.** When a person calls 2-1-1, a live information and referral specialist answers the call. In 2009, 2-1-1 provided critical connections for over 16 million callers, including millions of individuals and families struggling through the economic downturn. 2-1-1 provides speedy access to information about job training, educational resources, housing and food assistance and more.
- **The Calling for 2-1-1 Act, H.R.211 and S.211, enjoy broad bi-partisan support,** including 246 co-sponsors in the House and 61 in the Senate. H.R.211/S.211 would authorize HHS to create a matching grant program to support 2-1-1.
- Learn more at [www.liveunited.org/211](http://www.liveunited.org/211). Search for a local 2-1-1 at [www.211.org](http://www.211.org).