

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 11-0296R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmember Welch, President Young, Councilmembers Middleton, Branch,
Cole, Kraft, Conaway, Clarke, Reisinger, Curran, Henry

Introduced and read first time: June 13, 2011

Assigned to: Health Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Health Department, Department of Social Services

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Informational Hearing - Baltimore City Residents Use of 2-1-1 at UWCM**

3 FOR the purpose of inviting the Senior Vice President for Impact Strategies and the Director of
4 2-1-1 MD, United Way of Central Maryland (UWCM) and the Commissioner of Health to
5 report on Baltimore City residents' use of 2-1-1; the coordination between the United Way 2-
6 1-1 information and referral system and services offered by local government; and strategies
7 to increase usage of 2-1-1 referral services to link people in need to available private and
8 governmental community resources.

9 **Recitals**

10 2-1-1 is a 3 digit phone number set aside by the FCC for community information and referral
11 nationwide. 2-1-1 call centers can be found in 47 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. A
12 pilot of 2-1-1 was launched in Maryland, in October 2006. 2-1-1 MD at UWCM is one of 4 call
13 centers that comprise the 2-1-1 MD system. 2-1-1 MD at UWCM covers central Maryland,
14 including Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard Counties.

15 2-1-1 MD is a free, 24-hour, statewide confidential information and referral service that links
16 people in need to community resources through a reference database of over 4,500 local, state,
17 and national community resources connected to over 2400 agencies, and 2-1-1 MD information
18 and referral specialists connect callers with health and human service agencies, government
19 programs, and other resources that can assist with a wide range of problems. In calendar year
20 2010, approximately 41% of calls were from residents of Baltimore City.

21 The service is easy, free, and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for persons in need of
22 food, shelter, health, work, or any other basic human services. The line is available in more than
23 150 languages and serves as the central point of contact for a wide variety of state agencies, as
24 well as the state's main information source for H1N1, otherwise known as swine flu. For those
25 who prefer to search for resources online, the 2-1-1 database is publicly available online to
26 clients, friends and relatives, and professionals seeking services for their clients.

27 The system provides immediate access to information for users who in the past had to access
28 some 500 toll-free lines for information and referrals for health and human services. 2-1-1 MD
29 at UWCM partners with City agencies, non-profits, and funders to increase awareness and
30 utilization of resources. UWCM officials offer as an example the 2-year partnership with

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.
~~Strike out~~ indicates matter deleted by amendment.

Council Bill 11-0296R

1 Baltimore CASH to expand outreach efforts for free tax preparation services for Spanish-
2 speaking tax filers. The City's Senior Information and Assistance program forwards calls to 2-1-
3 1 MD evenings, weekends, holidays, and whenever City offices are closed. 2-1-1 MD at
4 UWCM is currently working closely with the Family League to ensure that services for youth in
5 the 2-1-1 resource database are current and comprehensive.

6 In 2009, the most common calls received by the system were from people searching for
7 information about housing or help with paying their utility bills. However, at that time, United
8 Way officials noted that the information sought was growing more and more complex and that
9 the downturn in the economy was driving more middle-class families to seek help to meet basic
10 needs.

11 In these trying economic times, 2-1-1 MD offers unprecedented access to a wide variety of
12 services essential to families in crisis. It will benefit Baltimore City residents to make certain
13 that they are aware of the invaluable assistance available to them through 2-1-1 MD at UWCM.

14 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
15 Senior Vice President for Impact Strategies and the Director of 2-1-1 MD, United Way of
16 Central Maryland and the Commissioner of Health are invited to report on Baltimore City
17 residents' use of 2-1-1; the coordination between United Way 2-1-1 information systems and
18 services offered by local government; and strategies to increase usage of 2-1-1 referral services
19 to link people in need to available private and governmental community resources.

20 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor; the
21 Senior Vice President for Impact Strategies, United Way of Central Maryland; the Director of 2-
22 1-1 MD, United Way of Central Maryland; the Commissioner of Health; the Director, Baltimore
23 City Department of Social Services; and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.