

F R O M	Name & Title	Oxiris Barbot, M.D. Commissioner of Health <i>Oxiris Barbot</i>	Health Department  MEMO	
	Agency Name & Address	Health Department 1001 E. Fayette Street		
	Subject	Council Resolution – 11-0296R – Informational Hearing – Baltimore City Resident Use of 211		

To: President and Members  
409 City Hall

July 8, 2011

The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) has reviewed City Council Resolution 11-0296R – Informational Hearing – Baltimore City Resident Use of 2-1-1. This resolution aims to examine Baltimore City residents' use of 211, the coordination between the United Way 2-1-1 informational and referral system and services offered by local government, and strategies to increase use of 2-1-1 as a referral service.

According to United Way of Central Maryland, there were 38,940 calls from Baltimore City residents to 2-1-1 in fiscal year 2011. Approximately 10% of these calls were directly related to health services (health care, mental health counseling, substance abuse/addiction, disaster services, and suicide). We also know, however, that our clinic staff and home visiting staff advise families of the use of 2-1-1 as a means to find out information related to other family needs such as household goods, utility assistance, and tax preparation assistance.

Three of the call center's major partners are Baltimore CASH, Baltimore Child Abuse Center, and The Family League. These partners have direct links to 2-1-1 through their websites and descriptions of what 2-1-1 has to offer. Baltimore City Health Department does not currently have this level of partnership with 2-1-1.

With nearly 39,000 calls in a year, the volume of calls is already quite high and what the call center contends with is managing the number of calls per day. The call center has opened up an option to leave a message rather than wait in a queue and calls are returned on the same day. City partnership with the call center could be enhanced so that it is an even more useful resource to residents in terms of accessing services such as health care. One way to increase utilization (assuming the call center has adequate staff to support increased utilization) would be to meet with UWCM call center staff and learn more about the resources listed through 2-1-1 and where there might be gaps. City clinics and home visiting staff could then more effectively communicate what a tremendous resource 2-1-1 is with clients directly and through our various social media outlets. UWCM could also give a primer on 2-1-1 to city agency staff so that there is a common understanding of its utility and could routinely share data about how well 2-1-1 is connecting citizens to agency resources.

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*Comments*

The Health Department appreciates the opportunity to participate in the discussions about the implications of this resolution, and believes 2-1-1 is an important resource for the citizens of Baltimore.

CC: Angela Gibson, Office of the Mayor  
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