



MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of York Regional Council

FROM: Adelina Urbanski, Commissioner of Community and Health Services

DATE: June 24, 2010

RE: **Update on 211 and Its Potential Launch in York Region**

This memorandum is intended to provide Regional Council with an update on the planned expansion of 211 and its possible implementation in York Region.

It has been brought to my attention that the 211 Services Corporation is working to expand its services province-wide by the end of 2011. They hope to expand 211 coverage to 20 municipalities this year, including York Region, which they believe will result in 211 service to 80% of the Province by year-end. The 211 Services Corporation hopes next year will see the remainder of the province gaining 211 telephone access. Internet access for services available in York Region is currently available at www.211Ontario.ca.

Funding sources for this project are still being identified. In 2008, the Province provided the 211 Services Corporation with \$13.5 million to expand the service across Ontario. Also in 2008, the Province committed to ongoing core funding in 2012 of \$4 million through its Poverty Reduction Strategy. The 211 Services Corporation recognizes that this will not be an adequate amount to fully fund the service. Provincial funds are primarily intended to pay for basic infrastructure. The question of who will pay for operating the service remains an issue to be resolved.

York Region and United Way staff have met with representatives from the 211 Services Corporation. Our understanding is that 211 will be launched in York Region sometime in the fall of 2010 (*see Council Attachment I*). The 211 Services Corporation has indicated that they would appreciate municipal political support, sharing of municipal data if appropriate to ensure that the database is complete for the community, and marketing and outreach support to ensure that local citizens are aware of the service.

York Region and some local municipalities have contact centres and YorkLink is used broadly by agencies, residents and organizations as a source of community information. From York Region's perspective 211 could be of benefit however the extent of this benefit is still being determined. Operating costs and who will pay for these costs are currently unknown. Recent estimates are that 211 in York Region could cost \$6 - \$7 per call and past estimates are that annual costs could be \$1 million annually. The 211 Services Corporation is hoping that the ongoing funding of 211 will at some point be a subject of discussion at the AMO/Provincial MOU table.

The 211 Services Corporation is also hoping that funding will be a subject of discussion at the United Way Ontario table. United Ways across Ontario have played a variety of roles in supporting the local development of 211. In York Region, United Way provided one-time seed funding for initial discussion and development of a shared data platform in the early 2000's. Over the last few years, United Way of York Region has focused investments on community priorities, staying informed of 211's evolution; this includes regular updates with Regional staff. United Way shares the perspective that 211 could be of benefit, however the cost implications and extent of this benefit still need to be determined.

For further information please contact me or Cordelia Abankwa-Harris, Managing Director, Strategic Service Integration and Policy Branch at Extension 2150.



Adelina Urbanski

Commissioner of Community and Health Services

CAH/kn

Attachment - 1

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June 16, 2010

When life gets 2 hard, 211 is here.

Important notice to York Region human services agencies:

As many of you may already know, the ever-expanding 211 service is coming to York Region. I am delighted to bring you the news that as a service delivery agency, you can have a sneak preview of the 211 service in York Region. Yes, you can simply try dialling this simple number and test-run the service. The full roll-out of the 211 for York Region with political presence and media coverage will take place later this Fall. However, we want you to have a test-run and let us know what you think.

You know that thousands of times a day, someone calls for a very specific helping hand. That call for help is for your service agency, or hundreds, indeed thousands of others offering vital social, community, health and government services. Findhelp has delivered community information for sixty years. You may already know us through The Blue Book which we publish every year. We provide over 430,000 callers a year (and our online users at 211ontario.ca) with one-stop, professional information and referral to approximately 60,000 agencies in the human services sector. You may find the occasional private or commercial organization in the 211 database. These services do not duplicate the work of a non-profit or community organization, but usually provide a service unique to their geographical area.

We would also ask that you take a few moments to check out your agency or organization's data record on 211ontario.ca. The goal for 211 is to keep all its information current and reliable. But we can only do that with your help. So, let us

know if there are any changes and we'll be better able to connect callers to the help they need.

Jennifer Leveridge at Newmarket Community Services is the person to contact for your data updates. You can reach Jennifer at 905-953-5110 extension 4710 or at jennifer.leveridge@newmarketpl.ca

If you have any questions or want to give us your thoughts once you've tried the 211 service, please contact Val McGee, Project Coordinator at ValerieMcGee@Rogers.com or Andre Paradis, aparadis@findhelp.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Janice Hayes', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Janice Hayes
Executive Director and CEO
Findhelp Information Services