

For Immediate Release
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\$200,000 Grant from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Positions NC 2-1-1 to Expand Services

Raleigh, N.C. – Today, 80% of North Carolinians can pick up the phone and dial 2-1-1 to get connected to local help, yet much of the eastern portion of the state is without access. A grant received from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina will enable NC 2-1-1 to build out its communications infrastructure and simplify service expansion in the 40 counties currently without access to 2-1-1.

The grant will also increase the number of resources listed in the health and human services database by 4,000, a 25% increase.

“North Carolinians who need assistance with anything from finding child care to locating health care services can seek help from more than 20,000 nonprofits and governmental agencies – but navigating the maze is not always easy,” said BCBSNC President and CEO Brad Wilson. “2-1-1 allows our citizens and customers to connect to the help they need with one phone call, and it’s important that everyone in our state has access to this service.”

NC 2-1-1 is United Way’s simple to remember, three-digit telephone number providing local communities with access to health and human services information every day, all day. 2-1-1 is a valuable planning tool, helping communities determine needs, gaps in services and assets available to meet local needs. For example, 2-1-1 can offer information about:

- affordable high quality child care/after-school care;
- counseling and support groups;
- health services;
- food, clothing and housing and
- services for seniors and the disabled.

Following the recent tornadoes, United Way was able to activate NC 2-1-1 in Cumberland and Bladen counties to facilitate local response and recovery efforts. In the future, NC 2-1-1 has the potential to provide the same service to all of the communities along our coast once the newly funded database expansion is complete.

“Thanks to Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina, our state will complete the basic infrastructure for the 2-1-1 system, and we will have the capacity to assist North

Carolinkians in times of disaster and personal crisis,” says Jim Morrison, President of United Way of North Carolina. “I am relieved to know that NC 2-1-1 will be positioned to connect every citizen to help when they need it most.”

The 40 county database expansion includes: Alleghany, Ashe, Beaufort, Bertie, Bladen, Camden, Carteret, Chowan, Cleveland, Craven, Cumberland, Currituck, Dare, Duplin, Gates, Granville, Halifax, Hertford, Hoke, Hyde, Jones, Martin, Mitchell, Montgomery, North Hampton, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Pitt, Polk, Richmond, Rutherford, Sampson, Stanly, Stokes, Tyrell, Washington, Wilkes, Yadkin and Yancey.

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Spearheaded by United Way of North Carolina, NC 2-1-1 is an easy to remember, three-digit telephone number that connects people to critical health and human service programs. Today, NC 2-1-1 reaches 80% of NC residents. United Way of North Carolina is actively working to expand 2-1-1 services statewide. To learn more visit nc211.org.

About BCBSNC:

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina is a leader in delivering innovative health care products, services and information to more than 3.7 million members, including approximately 900,000 served on behalf of other Blue Plans. For 77 years, the company has served its customers by offering health insurance at a competitive price and has served the people of North Carolina through support of community organizations, programs and events that promote good health. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. Access BCBSNC online at bcbsnc.com.