



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**LOCAL 2-1-1 CALL CENTER CELEBRATES SECOND ANNIVERSARY  
OF BECOMING NEW YORK STATE'S FIRST 2-1-1 PROGRAM:  
NATIONAL MEDIA EVENT COMMEMORATES 2-1-1 DAY**

Rochester, NY (February 12) — Two years and almost 45,000 telephone calls later, the 2-1-1 program in the Greater Rochester and Finger Lakes region has become a vital community resource for people who need help but don't know where to turn.

Annually on February 11<sup>th</sup>, "2-1-1 Day" is celebrated by 2-1-1 programs across the country. This year, in a very special event from Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., "2-1-1 Day" will also feature a national call to action to highlight the introduction of legislation in both the United States Senate (S. 211) and House of Representatives (H.R. 211) – *The Calling for 2-1-1 Act* – designed to focus national attention on the need to develop and fund the three-digit dialing system that provides vital community, volunteer and human service information and referral.

Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, lead sponsor of *The Calling for 2-1-1 Act*, will be joined by Senator Elizabeth Dole, Representative Anna Eshoo, Brian Gallagher, President and CEO of United Way of America, and Secretary Rodney Slater, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of United Way of America on Tuesday, February 13, 2007 at 10:15 a.m. in the Senate chambers in Washington, D.C.

2-1-1 is a free, confidential and easy to remember telephone number that provides 24-hour, 7 day a week access to trained counselors ready to provide information and referrals to human service agencies and programs throughout the area. 2-1-1 responds to questions about mental health issues, crisis counseling, emergency food, shelter, clothing, or other health and human service needs, connecting callers to local organizations and resources that can best meet those needs. Locally, the 2-1-1 program was initiated through the United Way of Greater Rochester and the 2-1-1 Finger Lakes Collaborative and was established in Rochester in January 2005, becoming the first community in New York State to implement this service.

"For anyone seeking to navigate the rich but complex maze of health and human services and the variety of help lines in New York State, especially poor and low income individuals, 2-1-1 provides an easy-to-remember number for those who need help," said A. Gidget Hopf, president and chief

executive officer of ABVI-Goodwill. “Our local 2-1-1 program is well on its way to becoming the one number to call when you need help but don’t know where to turn.”

In its first two years of operation, 2-1-1 has handled 44,829 calls, connecting these callers with vital health and human services. Those calls involved requests for information to address a variety of needs, including: a person’s basic needs, including emergency shelter, food, housing assistance, transportation, and utility assistance; legal and criminal justice issues; information about organizational and community services; information about local health care resources; issue related to individual and family life, mental health services, environmental concerns, and education; and others.

“We are very pleased with the success of the program during these first two years, and while we’ve had a great start, we still have so much more to do to fully evolve 2-1-1 as the sole number to call when information or referral services or other non-emergency crises arise,” added Hopf. “We’re looking forward to that challenge and are very excited about what the future holds.”

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2-1-1 is operated locally through the Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ABVI)-Goodwill Industries of Greater Rochester, Inc. who acquired the program in May 2005. With an existing and highly successful Call Center already in operation, ABVI-Goodwill’s acquisition of 2-1-1 provided a unique opportunity for the agency to collaborate with the United Way and other community organizations to continue to offer this vital community resource and also enhance the mission of ABVI-Goodwill.