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**Children & Family Services  
Committee**

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**HB 1787**

**Brief Description:** Establishing a 211 network.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Pettigrew, Boldt, Moeller, Miloscia, Jarrett, Priest, Dickerson and Santos.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Creates a 211 program in the state for public access to health and human services information and referral services.

**Hearing Date:** 2/27/03

**Staff:** Cynthia Forland (786-7152).

**Background:**

Abbreviated dialing codes enable callers to connect to a location in the phone network that otherwise would be accessible only via a seven- or 10-digit telephone number. Among abbreviated dialing arrangements, "N11" codes are three-digit codes of which the first digit can be any digit other than one or zero, and the last two digits are both one. There are only eight possible N11 codes, making N11 codes among the scarcest of numbering resources.

The Federal Communications Commission has exclusive jurisdiction over numbering administration, including the assignment of N11 codes. The current assignments for N11 codes are as follows:

- 2-1-1: Assigned for community information and referral services;
- 3-1-1: Assigned nationwide for non-emergency police and other government services;
- 4-1-1: Unassigned, but used virtually nationwide by carriers for directory assistance;
- 5-1-1: Assigned for traffic and transportation information;
- 6-1-1: Unassigned, but used broadly by carriers for repair service;
- 7-1-1: Assigned nationwide for access to Telecom Relay Services;
- 8-1-1: Unassigned, but used by local exchanged carriers for business office use; and
- 9-1-1: Universal emergency number for wireline and wireless telephone service.

The current assignment of the 211 abbreviated dialing code originated with a petition filed by the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems, the United Way of America, United Way 211 (Atlanta, Georgia), United Way of Connecticut, Florida Alliance of Information and Referral Services, Inc., and Texas I & R (Information and Referral) Network for nationwide assignment of an abbreviated calling code for access to community information and referral services. The petition cited a range of human needs not addressed by either the 911 code or police non-emergency 311 code, such as housing assistance, maintaining utilities, food, counseling, hospice services, services for the aging, substance abuse programs, and dealing with physical or sexual abuse.

The Washington Information Network 211 (WIN 211) is a private, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation dedicated to creating a comprehensive statewide information and referral system. Member organizations of WIN 211 currently provide information and referral services in their communities.

### **Summary of Bill:**

A 211 program is created within the Employment Security Department (ESD), and a 211 account is created in the State Treasury. Moneys in the account may be spent only after appropriation. The account will include appropriations by the Legislature, private contributions, and funding from all other sources. Expenditures from the 211 account must be limited to the implementation and support of the 211 system.

The ESD is required to use moneys from the 211 account and other legislative appropriations to finance in whole or in part the study, design, implementation, and support of a statewide 211 system. Activities eligible for assistance from the 211 account and other legislative appropriations include, but are not limited to:

- Creating a structure for a statewide 211 resources database that will meet the Alliance for Information and Referral Systems standards for information and referral systems databases and that will be integrated with local resources databases maintained by approved 211 service providers, which are defined as nonprofit agencies or organizations designated by WIN 211 to provide 211 services;
- Developing a statewide resources database for the 211 system;
- Enhancing the Access Washington resource database maintained by the Corrections Clearinghouse Division of the ESD to support the 211 system;
- Maintaining public information available from state agencies, departments, and programs that provide health and human services for access by 211 service providers;
- Providing grants to approved 211 service providers for the design, development, and implementation of 211 for its 211 service area, which is defined as an area of the state identified by WIN 211 as an area in which an approved 211 service provider will provide 211 services;
- Providing grants to approved 211 service providers to enable them to provide 211 service on an ongoing basis; and
- Providing grants to approved 211 service providers to enable the provision of 211 services on a 24-hour-per-day 7-day-a-week basis.

A health and human services agency or a public or private entity receiving state-appropriated funds to provide health and human services is required to provide the Commissioner of the

ESD (Commissioner) with information about the health and human services provided by the agency or entity for inclusion in the statewide 211 resources database. The agency or entity must provide the information in a form determined by the Commissioner and update the information at least quarterly.

Before establishing a new public information telephone line or hotline, a state agency or department that provides health and human services must consult with the Commissioner about using the 211 system to provide access for the public to the information to be made available.

The ESD is authorized to adopt rules regarding grants and requirements for eligible recipients of funds from the 211 account.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 2003.