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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Governor Baker Declares February 11 as Mass 2-1-1 Day in Massachusetts! 2017 Marks 20th Anniversary of 2-1-1 Nationally

Framingham, MA - Governor Charlie Baker has declared February 11, 2017 as 2-1-1 Day in Massachusetts. The Governor is committed to raising awareness of Mass 2-1-1, which receives more than 110,000 calls annually and responds to over 250,000 web queries from people in the Commonwealth seeking resources.

February 11, also marks the 20th anniversary of 2-1-1 nationally. Recognizing this free, user-friendly phone and online system that serves 90% of America's population, and connects some 16 million people a year to critical resources, information and services.

People call or search 2-1-1 looking for resources to meet basic needs, like heating or utility assistance, shelter, emergency help, and child care or to find the closest food pantry. They also call for everyday important non-emergency needs, such as developmental screening for a child, home health care for a relative, job training or free tax filing support.

2-1-1 was launched by United Way 20 years ago as a free way to connect people to essential resources. Today, 2-1-1 is available in all 50 states, plus Washington DC and Puerto Rico. In Massachusetts, 2-1-1 service is available in all 14 counties, serving 100% of the state's population. "Mass 2-1-1 is an essential tool for helping people take better care of their families, and also to making more efficient use of a community's nonprofit and public resources," said Gary Lever, Vice President of Mass 2-1-1.

So what happens when you call Mass2-1-1? When you dial 2-1-1 (a free call), the call is routed to a trained information and referral specialist, who helps identify your need(s), then refers you to relevant human services, health or education resources from a comprehensive database. For example, in the case of a worker who has recently been laid off or whose hours have been reduced, the 2-1-1 specialist may share information about unemployment benefits, job search options, food stamps, food pantries, mortgage or rent help, utility assistance, counseling and other available resources. Recently, United Way's **Call2Talk** Mental Health/Suicide Prevention line has become part of the state-wide 2-1-1 platform and can be accessed from anywhere in the Commonwealth by just dialing 2-1-1.

Mass 2-1-1 is a program of the United Ways of Massachusetts and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. According to Mass2-1-1 CEO Paul Mina, "the collaboration between the United Way and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts allows Mass2-1-1 to access stable resources sufficient enough to continue this vital service well into the future". The mission of Mass 2-1-1 is to ensure that Massachusetts residents get correct and helpful information the first time they call.

United Way of Tri-County



The United Way of Tri-County is a community building organization dedicated to bringing people together to care for one another. The United Way provides programs and services, connects volunteers, strengthens agencies, teaches social responsibility, and meets the critical needs of the community with the help of people like you. The United Way of Tri-County, under contract with Mass2-1-1 provides 2-1-1 services for the citizens of the Commonwealth 24/7 365 day per year.

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