

MASS2-1-1 PRESS RELEASE

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Mass 211 Day raises awareness of valuable resource for residents

Framingham, MA – Monday, February 12th, has been designated by Governor Maura Healey as “211” Day in Massachusetts. Local leaders, legislators, and other stakeholders will be hosted at the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency’s headquarters in Framingham where over one hundred staff and volunteers will be honored in recognition of answering over 500,000 calls from Massachusetts residents in 2023.

Mass211 is a partnership between the Commonwealth and the United Way’s of Massachusetts, founded on July 1, 2006. United Ways across Massachusetts are celebrating National 2-1-1 Day this February, calling attention to this free comprehensive information & referral service

“Our partnership with agencies like MEMA allows Mass211 to be the most robust state information and referral resource empowering individuals to access key emergency and non-emergency social service information across the Commonwealth,” said Mass211 Executive Director, Paul Mina. “The mission of Mass211 has always been to ensure Massachusetts residents receive the most accurate and up-to-date information when they need it,” Mina concludes.

Mass211, is a free telephone hotline, and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, with translation services in more than 150 languages.

“MEMA is honored to help celebrate our partners at Mass211, whom we have called upon many times this past year to support emergency response, disaster recovery, and humanitarian missions,” said MEMA Director Dawn Brantley. “Mass211 is a critical resource for Massachusetts residents providing citizens with essential and accessible information and non-emergency assistance before, during, and after emergency or disaster events. I thank all those who have helped and who continue to help make this service an invaluable resource for residents of the Commonwealth.”

How does Mass211 work? Residents of the Commonwealth simply dial 211 from any landline or cell phone in the state or search its online database looking for resources to connect to basic health and human service needs like utility payment assistance, housing, transportation, legal aid, childcare, employment assistance, mental and behavioral supports, and more. To visit Mass211 online go to www.mass211.org.

Governor Maura Healey will be participating via a pre-recorded video message to attendees. Long time Mass211 and Call2Talk supporter and Massachusetts Senate President Karen Spilka will read the Governor's proclamation declaring February 12 as official 211 Day in the state.

Blackburn Labs will provide a demo and highlight improvements to the enhanced Mass211 database Mass211HelpSteps, demonstrating how to easily navigate the system and search for resources.

Additional local legislators, United Way Leadership, board members, and 211 staff will also be in attendance including: Tom Ashe, Director of Legislative Affairs at the Office of Safety and Security for a the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, City of Framingham Mayor Charlie Sisitsky, Representative Jack Patrick Lewis, (D Framingham), Mass211 Board Chair and United Way of South Central MA Executive Director, Mary O'Coin, United Way of Mass Bay Ansin President and CEO, Bob Giannino, Berkshire United Way President & CEO Tom Bernard, Victoria Grasela, VP Marketing & Community Engagement, United Way of Greater New Bedford, newly elected Mayor of the City of Marlborough, J. Christian Dumas and Chief of Staff Ryan Egan, Tyreese Nichols, Deputy Commissioner for Family Access & Engagement from the Department of Early Education and Care, United Way of Tri-County Board Chair and President & CEO at St. Mary's Credit Union, Larissa Thurston, and board members Robert Moran, Jr., Manager Community and Customer Management at National Grid, Rev. Doctor J. Anthony Lloyd, Pastor at the Greater Framingham Community Church, and United Way General Council Aldo Cipriano, from the Law Offices of Aldo Cipriano.

Call2Talk, Mass2-1-1's mental health, emotional support and suicide prevention line, answers calls through the Mass2-1-1 statewide platform as well as answering calls from the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, known as 988. Highly trained volunteer call-takers answer calls and provide confidential and often lifesaving support to people experiencing emotional distress or potential suicidal ideation and have nowhere else to turn. Call2Talk also works in partnership with Crisis

Text Line to provide support by text for those uncomfortable with speaking to a call taker. Anyone needing emotional support can be connected to a Call2Talk volunteer by dialing 2-1-1 from any phone in Massachusetts.

“The celebration of 211 Day provides a wonderful opportunity to highlight the abundant resources that Massachusetts has to offer, thank the team of call takers that compassionately handle the hundreds of thousands of calls that come into our Call Center and appreciate the strength of the callers that reach out for support while facing some very challenging times in their lives”, said Eileen Davis, Vice President of Mass211.

Mass211 is also called upon in times of emergency similar to the COVID-19 pandemic. Beginning in March of 2020, then Governor Charlie Baker utilized Mass211 as the official number to call for the most accurate and up-to-date information on the pandemic, and Mass211 Information & Referral specialists answered more than one million pandemic related calls.

To learn more about the United Way and Mass2-1-1 please visit their website at <https://www.uwotc.org>, <https://mass211.org>

Mass2-1-1 Inc. is a subsidiary organization of the United Ways in Massachusetts charged with providing the citizens of the Commonwealth with correct, timely and accurate information the first time they are called or searched. Mass2-1-1 was created and is staffed by the United Way. This 24/7/365 service was created as a resource to connect callers to information about critical health and human services programs.

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