

2011 SENATE HUMAN SERVICES

SB 2152

# 2011 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Senate Human Services Committee Red River Room, State Capitol

SB 2152  
1-19-2011  
Job Number 13090

☐ Conference Committee

Committee Clerk Signature



### Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

To provide an appropriation to the department of emergency services for a grant for administering 211 services.

### Minutes:

Attached testimony.

**Senator Judy Lee** opened the hearing on SB 2152.

**Senator Judy Lee** (District 13) introduced the bill and said it was a very important continuation of services that were supposed to be provided statewide.

**Cindy Miller** (Director of FirstLink) testified in support of SB 2152. Attachment #1 includes letters of support.

The fiscal note and funding was discussed. Cass and Clay counties would be contributing the dollars that would be necessary to provide services to just Cass and Clay counties. The goal is to make sure the services are provided elsewhere in the state which FirstLink has done thanks to the support from various agencies. What is being looked at here is the difference between providing services to the rest of the state and just providing services to Cass and Clay counties.

**Senator Tim Mathern** pointed out that it appears the money runs out for FirstLink before this appropriation would take effect by a month. He asked what they would do in that month.

**Ms. Miller** responded that she is currently working with some of the United Ways across the state and is hoping some of them will come forward with some funding.

**Susan Rae Helgeland** (Mental Health America of ND) testified in support. Attachment #2

**Colonel David Thiele** (Office of the Adjutant General) explained how they utilize 211 both in the military and the Department of Emergency Services. They both use 211 extensively.

**Senator Dick Dever** asked if they contract with 211 and if there are funds involved with it.

**Col. Thiele** responded that they did originally. About three years ago they had some federal funding they utilized to provide the training.

The hearing on SB 2152 was closed.

Attachment #3 contains additional testimony provided for the committee from various sources.

# 2011 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Senate Human Services Committee  
Red River Room, State Capitol

SB 2152  
1-25-2011  
Job Number 13387

☐ Conference Committee

Committee Clerk Signature



## Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

To provide an appropriation to the department of emergency services for a grant for administering 211 services.

## Minutes:

**Senator Judy Lee** opened committee work on SB 2152.

The need for this to continue was discussed. There are many numbers that are handled through this program. An emergency clause was discussed because the current state support is done June 30, 2011. After a call to Legislative Council it was confirmed that the bill would go into effect on July 1, 2011. No emergency clause would be needed.

Discussion continued: The funding to run this program in Cass County, ND, and Clay County, MN, will continue to be handled by Cass and Clay. The money looked at here is the dollar amount it takes to continue providing the service for the rest of the ND counties with the upgraded services currently in place. If the difference isn't properly funded it won't work.

At the start there were entities not involved such as Division of Emergency Services, National Guard, and the Insurance Dept. Currently, there are connections in place with state departments and agencies that weren't there before. That is now part of the source of the funding. United Way funding is the primary funder.

The history of the program was discussed and an explanation of how it works was given.

**Senator Tim Mathern** moved a **Do Pass** and **refer to Appropriations**.

Seconded by **Senator Gerald Uglem**.

Roll call vote 5-0-0. **Motion carried.**

Carrier is **Senator Tim Mathern**.

Date: 1-25-11

Roll Call Vote # \_\_\_\_\_

2011 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 2152

Senate HUMAN SERVICES Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number \_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken: ☒ Do Pass ☐ Do Not Pass ☐ Amended ☐ Adopt Amendment

☒ Rerefer to Appropriations ☐ Reconsider

Motion Made By Sen. Mathern Seconded By Sen. Uglem

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
Sen. Judy Lee, Chairman	✓		Sen. Tim Mathern	✓	
Sen. Dick Dever	✓				
Sen. Gerald Uglem, V. Chair	✓				
Sen. Spencer Berry	✓				

Total (Yes) 5 No 0

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Sen. Mathern

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

**SB 2152: Human Services Committee (Sen. J. Lee, Chairman) recommends DO PASS and BE REREFERRED to the Appropriations Committee (5 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2152 was rereferred to the Appropriations Committee.**

2011 SENATE APPROPRIATIONS

SB 2152

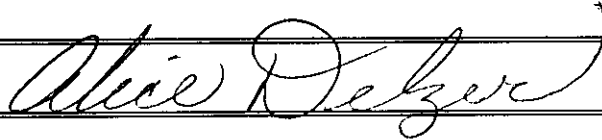
# 2011 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Senate Appropriations Committee Harvest Room, State Capitol

SB 2152  
02-04-2011  
Job # 14009

☐ Conference Committee

Committee Clerk Signature



### Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

Department of Emergency Services for grant for 211 Services

### Minutes:

See attached testimony.

**Chairman Holmberg** called the committee to order on Friday, February 4, 2011 at 9:00 am. All committee members were present except Senator Kilzer and Senator Robinson. Tad H. Torgerson, OMB and Brady Larson, Legislative Council were present.

**Senator Judy Lee, District 32, West Fargo** introduced SB 2152. Requesting that funding be provided for a grant for 2-1-1 services statewide. She stated Cass and Clay Counties have taken it upon themselves to continue the 2-1-1 services, but if this Bill doesn't pass, there will be no service in the rest of North Dakota because the funding for 2-1-1 has gone away. Several people got together to keep the program going until today so at least we can look at in this legislative session the possibility of continuing this service. There are many agencies that use 2-1-1 to handle their calls. It is an easy number for people to remember. I encourage you to keep these services to all of ND. (Meter 4.23)

**Tom Regan**, Member of the Board of Directors of Mental Health of ND, former Executive Director of United Way testified in favor of SB 2152 Testimony attached # 1. He stated he is here to support the appropriations to the Department of Emergency Services for a grant to administer statewide 2-1-1 services. He stated that they know this service saves lives.

**Cindy Miller** Executive Director of FirstLink testified in favor of SB 2152 Testimony attached # 2. She stated FirstLink is involved with the 2-1-1 and stated they served all 53 counties in 2010. Letters of Support and marketing brochure are as follows: ND Mental Health Planning Council, ND Public Service Commission, ND Insurance Department, ND League of Cities, ND Fraternal Order of Police, Terry L. Styf, Mental Health America of ND (MHAND), United Way of Cass-Clay Counties, marketing tool – FirstLink Brochure.

**Senator Warner** asked for information regarding the training that goes into the person that answers the phone.

**Cindy Miller:** We have 70 hours of training that all staff have to go through before they answer a phone. They go through 40 hours of training, and then they have so many hours



of listening in our calls from people who have been trained, and then we listen to their calls and assisting them with their calls and they go through ASSIST which is Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training, myself and one other person went to New York with National Suicide Prevention Lifeline for a week long training to be certified trainers for them, so they have to go through a 2 day training on that. We just finished that training last week. We had people from Fort Totten, all across the state came to the training but all our staff are required to attend those training sessions before they can go on the phone by themselves.

**Senator Wanzek** stated this is the first time he has heard of 2-1-1 and asked how the public gets informed that this is available.

**Cindy Miller** stated it is probably more well known in Cass and Clay County because that is where our primary services. We did put in money for marketing last year with PSA they said they would help. I've been meeting with the United Ways across the state making sure they have our information and sending it out there. We are in need of help, a big part of this budget is marketing.

**Senator Krebsbach** asked what happens to someone outside of Cass or Clay County that dials 2-1-1. She was told there won't be a connection. The calls go from where you are located at, for example if you go to East Grand Forks, the calls usually go to Duluth. It is getting so there is more and more 2-1-1 centers across all of US. They can still call us direct but this bill will provide a 3 digit easy-to-remember number for people to call.

**V. Chair Bowman** asked if 911 is still available in areas where 2-1-1 is not available. He was told by Cindy that they are trained in crisis intervention and one of the first things we tell people if we feel it is an emergency, that it's 911 we will either live connect them directly or we will help them with that process. I don't know if 911 is everywhere in the state.

**Senator Krebsbach** asked if this program was initially in the DHS Department.

**Senator Lee:** 2-1-1 has never been handled in the DHS, but the DHS contracts with 2-1-1 for handling some of the calls. Alternatives to Abortion will be one. I wanted to clarify 911 is a dispatch center issue getting an ambulance or police officer and this can include that.

**Cindy Miller** made comments that many service organizations support the 2-1-1 program. We are AIRS (Alliance of Information and Referral Systems) accredited which is across the country. It is a national organization that 2-1-1 centers are wanting to be in to show that their level of certification and the care that they are giving is at that quality.

**John Jacobson**, Chairman of the Legislative Committee of the ND Veterans Coordinating Council. The Coordinating council is made up of 15 members, 3 from each of the five Veterans Organizations in ND: American Legion, AMVETS, Disable American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Vietnam Veterans of America, testified in favor of SB 2152 Testimony attached # 3. We recommend a DO PASS by the Veterans Coordinating Council.

**Greg Wilz**, Deputy Director, Department of Emergency Services and Director of Homeland Security Division offering testimony from a neutral perspective. Testimony attached # 4. We

developed a statewide voluntary database for people with disabilities and those who possess identified levels of vulnerability. One of our goals has been to help folks that really don't have an ability to provide all the help they need or have family members close by to do that so we have built this wonderful database that we want populated eventually and that database would be used statewide for identifying folks that if there was an evacuation or if there was a chemical spill, we know where these people are quickly so we can come to their aid as to opposed to going on to every house and knocking on doors we go to the houses we know we got people to help. This project has been delayed due to software upgrades and interface problems. We hope to have it ready within 30 to 45 days. The vendor search revealed that at the time 2-1-1 which was under the control of the Mental Health Association of ND (MHAND) was the only provider and the sole contract was approved by OMB at the time. The Department operates State Radio, a public service answering point for 22 counties. The value of 2-1-1 in relationship of having those types of calls not come into 911 center is there.

**V. Chair Grindberg** stated on Monday we will start on the budget and we will start up first with you, Emergency Services in the Adjutant General's budget (SB 2016). The subcommittee is Grindberg, Holmberg, Warner.

**Col David Thiele**, Director of Personnel, NDNG, testified in favor of SB 2152. We also partner on the military side with 2-1-1. What we have done is created a system in training with 2-1-1. We train their personal to identify when a veteran would call, so at that point they make a proper referral, identify particular veteran issues and know where to make that referral. It has been a win-win for us and that's not just National Guard, it's all veterans that we're targeting with that.

**Mark Nauman**, First Link Board, Volunteer Board Chair stated the ARIS accreditation was a massive project for several years and it was meant to get up to speed with 2-1-1. What we did in the meantime along the way it made us upgrade our computers and our phones to be ARIS accredited. All of our database, hardware and phone systems are less than 2 years old. As far as taking on 2-1-1 calls statewide, we are already there as far as infrastructure is concerned.

Testimony # 5 –cover letter from PSC and ORDER DESIGNATING STATEWIDE 211 DIALING CODE USER.

**Chairman Holmberg** closed the hearing on SB 2152.

# 2011 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Senate Appropriations Committee Harvest Room, State Capitol

SB 2152  
February 18, 2011  
Job # 14729 (Meter starting at 51:05)

☐ Conference Committee

Committee Clerk Signature

*Rose Lanning*

### Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

A committee vote on SB 2152 for a Department of Emergency Services for 211 Services.

### Minutes:

You may make reference to "attached testimony."

**Chairman Holmberg** opened the hearing on SB 2152 on the emergency services grant.

**Senator Grindberg** said this bill was brought up in subcommittee in the Adjutant Generals budget. Wondered if this should be a Human Service request through their budget or through the emergency services. In the subcommittee, the sense was that this was not as wide spread in need as what might be prescribed in the overall intent of the bill.

**Senator Grindberg moved Do Not Pass on SB 2152.**

**Senator Christmann seconded.**

**A Roll Call vote was taken. Yea: 8 Nay: 5 Absent: 0**

**Senator Grindberg will carry the bill.**

**Senator Krebsbach** said she would like to see the dollars amended down rather than kill the bill.

**Senator O'Connell** said this was brought up in the interim committee and when we toured the facilities, it showed a great need. I'd like to see something left into it and go to a conference committee before we're out of here.

**Senator Warner** commented that it's a good thing there are no crazy people in the west because we don't have any psychiatrists. Having access to 211 services in the west is needed because right now it's only available in the Fargo area.

Date: 2-18-11  
Roll Call Vote # 1

2011 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES  
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 2152

Senate Appropriations Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number \_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken: ☒ Do Pass ☒ Do Not Pass ☐ Amended ☐ Adopt Amendment

☐ Rerefer to Appropriations ☐ Reconsider

Motion Made By \_\_\_\_\_ Seconded By Christmann

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
Chairman Holmberg	✓		Senator Warner		✓
Senator Bowman	✓		Senator O'Connell		✓
Senator Grindberg	✓		Senator Robinson		✓
Senator Christmann	✓				
Senator Wardner	✓				
Senator Kilzer	✓				
Senator Fischer		✓			
Senator Krebsbach		✓			
Senator Erbele	✓				
Senator Wanzek	✓				

Total (Yes) 8 No 5

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Grindberg

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

**SB 2152: Appropriations Committee (Sen. Holmberg, Chairman)** recommends **DO NOT PASS** (8 YEAS, 5 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2152 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

2011 TESTIMONY

SB 2152



Chairman Lee and members of the Senate Human Services Committee. I am Cindy Miller, Executive Director of FirstLink. I am here today to ask you to support SB #2152 requesting \$775,910 in funding for the upcoming biennium for the purpose of supporting and maintaining 2-1-1 service statewide.

FirstLink's HotLine was incorporated in 1971 and continues to ensure people have access to 24 hour information and referral about nonprofit human service and emergency resources as well as listening and support. Previously, FirstLink subcontracted with MHAND to take 2-1-1 calls for Cass County. But in October of 2009 we received a call stating MHAND was closing their doors October 31, 2009. They wanted to know if we could continue the 2-1-1 statewide service. Our board believed in the importance of 2-1-1 and knew that to restart a program would be extremely challenging and detrimental to people in North Dakota who rely on the service. So we decided to do whatever it took to continue 2-1-1 service statewide... at least temporarily. We realized that this would mean more calls, and more updating of our database would be needed. We are only as good as the information we give callers. We also discovered that the former 2-1-1 statewide database was not current and would require a significant amount of time and financial resources to get current.

Therefore, we asked the Public Service Commissioners if they could assist us in seeking financial assistance. If we could get financial help we would love to be the designated 2-1-1 provider for the entire state of North Dakota. When concerned groups gathered, the stories we heard about the importance of continuing 2-1-1 was amazing. They stepped up and told us over and over again how essential 2-1-1 service is to the citizens of North Dakota.

This is why I am here today! This service is our mission and passion and has been for over 40 years. FirstLink is a highly qualified 2-1-1 call center. With certifications in

American Association of Suicidology (AAS), Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS), and all staff are trained in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST).

It seems everyone is concerned and worried about something these days. We are filled with fears – about losing our homes, jobs, retirement packages, freedom, and natural disasters. However, since FirstLink 2-1-1 is here 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year to provide resources and referrals to callers, we have the ability to make getting help much easier.

When it comes to disaster services, FirstLink has contracts with local counties and cities to assist them during disasters. In 2009 they coordinated over 100,000 volunteers and answered over 50,000 calls on a volunteer flood hotline related to disaster preparation and clean-up. FirstLink has the ability to assist as needed in disasters through contracts and through 2-1-1. FirstLink 2-1-1 can assist callers who have experienced a disaster and are in need of resources and referrals to help them get through such difficult times. Year round, FirstLink understands that when basic needs are met, people are better able to cope with disaster. Therefore, by providing referrals for basic needs and by empowering callers, FirstLink 2-1-1 helps strengthen the resilience of our community.

To be more specific about our services, FirstLink 2-1-1 is a free hotline answered 24 hours a day providing:

Listening and support and information and referral about human service resources.

Common 2-1-1 referrals include, but are not limited to:

Disasters

Emergency Shelters

Financial Assistance

Military/Veteran Support

Support Groups

Addictions

Disability Support



## Volunteer Opportunities

### Who needs FirstLink?

All people...anywhere in North Dakota anytime!

People who need resources and referrals

People who need help during times of crisis

People who are negatively impacted by the economy

People with mental health issues

People from rural communities where fewer resources may be available

People from large communities where many resources are available

### Where does FirstLink 2-1-1 currently receive most of its funding?

FirstLink's main funding source has been through the United Way of Cass-Clay. They have and will continue to support FirstLink's 2-1-1 HotLine, Suicide Lifeline, and suicide services for the Cass-Clay communities. FirstLink has contracts with Cass County, Clay County, and the Cities of Fargo, Moorhead and West Fargo to provide disaster services. They also have contracts with various human service agencies to provide crisis support after hours. Currently 2-1-1 statewide funding has been received from the North Dakota Department of Health, North Dakota Department of Human Services, and other United Ways from across the state. The current state support is done June 30, 2011. The demand for services provided by FirstLink to North Dakota residents continues to increase, while funding declines.

### Why should the state invest in FirstLink 2-1-1?

North Dakota's 2-1-1 service is in jeopardy without state funding.

2-1-1 is a free, easy to remember three digit number that is available 24/7 to the ENTIRE state of North Dakota. Now is the time to invest in FirstLink 2-1-1. This will assure that all citizens have information about services available to them, including disaster preparation and relief services.

At the moment North Dakota's 2-1-1 service also benefits from FirstLink's partnership with the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255 (TALK). At FirstLink all call specialists that answer 2-1-1 also answer the suicide lifeline. Therefore, FirstLink 2-1-1 call specialists are not only trained in information and referral, but also in crisis and suicide prevention. FirstLink has found this training to be significantly beneficial since 2-1-1 callers can very easily turn to suicidal callers. FirstLink is the only call center in the state of North Dakota that takes calls on this designated national suicide lifeline. The national network assures that no call for help goes unanswered.

In 2010:

FirstLink deescalated hundred's of callers who were suicidal and needed a safe place to call to collaborate on a safety plan. These calls saved North Dakota law enforcement, fire departments, dispatch centers, and EMT's hundred's of hours of time. By calling FirstLink these departments did not need to dispatch help for welfare checks, or spend time deescalating citizens.

FirstLink contracted to provide significant flood relief services.

FirstLink 2-1-1 gives social service agencies a place for their clients to call for crisis support on evenings and weekends.

FirstLink 2-1-1 gave shelter and financial information to help keep citizens safe and off of the streets.

FirstLink 2-1-1 made over 15,440 referrals.

FirstLink 2-1-1 gave hope to 35,820 callers who needed assistance.

FirstLink answered 796 calls related to suicide on all phone lines.

FirstLink 2-1-1 answered calls from all 53 counties in North Dakota.

An African proverb tells us, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." Together we can go far...because HOPE DOES BEGIN HERE with FirstLink 2-1-1 24 hours a day, everyday, everywhere in the state of North Dakota. It doesn't matter who you are or where you live with financial assistance by the state, all North Dakota residents can get help and support. Large cities, rural areas, we are there for everyone, night and day.

There are letters of support in your packets, and brochures with more details about FirstLink 2-1-1.

Chairman Lee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee today. If you have any questions I will be happy to respond.

Cindy Miller

First Link Executive Director

(701)-293-6462

[cindym@myfirstlink.org](mailto:cindym@myfirstlink.org)



Richard Griffin  
President, Lodge #1

**RED RIVER LODGE #1**  
**ND FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE**

P.O. Box 962 \* Fargo \* North Dakota \* 58107-0962



Dear Senator Judy Lee,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Fraternal Order of Police, Red River Valley Lodge #1 in support of Senate Bill number #2152. This bill is focused on the continuation of the 211 services for the State of North Dakota.

The Fraternal Order of Police, Red River Valley Lodge #1 has over 200 members in Cass County and represents Federal, State, and Local law enforcement officers.

The passage of this bill would allow FirstLink to continue to provide suicide and crisis intervention, information and referral services, and the organization of volunteers. The 211 service has proven to be a great resource for law enforcement officers and citizens of North Dakota. Often times law enforcement personnel are contacted by FirstLink to respond to individuals in crisis that are threatening suicide. Because of the service FirstLink provides, many lives have been affected in a positive manner. FirstLink is recognized nationally for suicide intervention and rescue services it provides.

On behalf of the Fraternal Order of Police, Red River Valley Lodge #1 we thank you for your support of this bill.

Sincerely,

Patrick Hanson  
Secretary  
Red River Valley Lodge #1  
PO BOX 962  
Fargo, ND 58107

Dear Senator Judy Lee,

I am writing to you about a bill that I strongly support:

- SB #2152 which affects ND 211 SERVICE provided by FirstLink.

This bill would allow the ND 211 system to continue as statewide wide service that gives all North Dakotans access to listening and support, crisis intervention and resource and referral services provided by FirstLink.

FirstLink has a long history in the Fargo area for providing the services I have listed along with a wide variety of community services and educational programs.

Nationally FirstLink is recognized for its suicide intervention and rescue services it provides as part of its day to day operation.

I have been able to work with FirstLink and its staff since 2002 in many different capacities both during their day to day operations and during emergency operations.

During 3 different spring floods I have worked side by side with FirstLink Staff and members of our community using the services set up and operated by FirstLink. A very large gap was filled by the services and organizational skills provide by FirstLink the FM Area during our time of need.

SB #2152 will help to support ND 211 and all of the services provided by FirstLink.

Thank you for your support of this important program. Thanks, too, for all you do to serve the people of our district.

Sincerely,

Terry L. Styf 807 Elm Street West Fargo ND. 701-281-0379 [terry.styf@westfargond.gov](mailto:terry.styf@westfargond.gov)

January 13, 2011

Senator Judy Lee  
1822 Brentwood Court  
West Fargo, ND 58078-4204

Dear Senator Lee:

United Way of Cass-Clay strongly encourages the support of SB#2152 to provide an appropriation to the Department of Emergency Services for a grant to administer 2-1-1 services in North Dakota.

Every hour of every day, someone in North Dakota needs essential services – from finding substance abuse services, to reporting a case of child abuse or neglect, to securing adequate care for an aging parent. Often times, people end up going without services because they do not know where to turn.

North Dakota has an active Call Center (FirstLink), but the Center lacks the resources needed to maintain appropriate staff levels and training, maintain the 24-hour-a-day services, and to ensure complete and accurate information databases needed to reach rural populations. Support of SB#2152 would provide the funding necessary to meet these needs.

2-1-1 is most effective when built on solid public/private partnerships and with a diverse and sustainable funding base. Currently, in the state of North Dakota, 2-1-1 is funded through private sources, including United Ways and other nonprofits, foundations, businesses and fee-for-service contracts.

State funding for 2-1-1 will supplement, not replace, those funding streams.

United Way of Cass-Clay provides annual funding in the amount of \$170,000 to Firstlink for the provision of 2-1-1 services and \$60,000 for Volunteer Center services in Cass County, ND and Clay County, MN. Our community is providing adequate private funding for 2-1-1. There is, however, a lack of funding for other ND communities, including vast rural areas that have no access to services or information.

Another benefit of 2-1-1 to ND taxpayers is the reduction of the number of non-emergency calls to 9-1-1 and the emergency services providers in all North Dakota communities. This reduces the burden for 9-1-1 dispatchers across the state and often times ensures that more appropriate telephone listening and support, crisis intervention and suicide prevention services are provided.

Senator Judy Lee

Page 2

As of April 2010, 2-1-1 served over 246 million Americans (more than 82% of the entire population) covering all or part of 47 states (including 33 states with 90% + coverage) plus Washington, DC and Puerto Rico. The remaining states are all in various stages of planning and implementation. Every few weeks, these coverage numbers increase.

Please let us know if we can provide any additional information. You may contact Thomas Hill at (701) 237-5050 or [thill@unitedwaycassclay.org](mailto:thill@unitedwaycassclay.org) or you may visit [www.211us.org](http://www.211us.org).

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Melinda Haun  
President

January 10, 2011

Senator Lee and the Human Services Committee:

This letter is written in support of North Dakota's 211 service. 211 provides an important service to those in need of information or support in their time of need. In addition to its traditional information and referral services, 211 also plays a crucial role in our state's ability to respond to disaster.

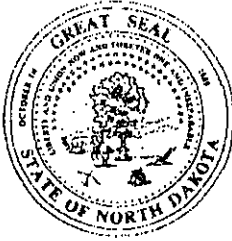
During the spring of 2009, the state of North Dakota experienced a record-setting statewide flood. As the floodwaters began to rise in communities throughout the state, it became apparent that some sort of hotline was needed to provide information and coordinate donations and volunteers. 211 agreed to step in and provide this vital link, ultimately taking thousands of calls and coordinating thousands of volunteers and donations. There was no other organization in the state set up with the infrastructure, staff and training to fulfill this need at a moment's notice.

As you can see, the continuation of 211 services in our state is essential for information, referral, and crisis management services as well as additional services in the event of disaster. It is with this information that I wholeheartedly support North Dakota 211.

Sincerely,

Connie Sprynczynatyk  
Executive Director  
North Dakota League of Cities





# North Dakota Insurance Department

Adam W. Hamm, Commissioner

January 7, 2011

Sen. Judy Lee, Chairman  
Human Services Committee  
North Dakota State Capital  
600 E. Boulevard Ave.  
Bismarck, ND 58505

Dear Sen. Lee:

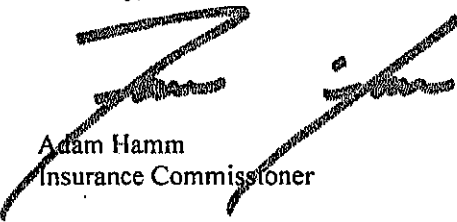
In March 2010, a group of state agencies and nonprofits worked together to keep 211 going statewide after an announcement that its funding would not last through the end of the year. Now the legislature has the opportunity to revive this vital service long-term.

211 is an important statewide resource. It provided essential services to North Dakotans on behalf of the Insurance Department during the last two Medicare Part D annual enrollment periods. Nearly 2,000 beneficiaries called 211 in 2009 and 2010 to take advantage of the convenient service. By handling those calls, 211 enabled our Department to help even more North Dakotans during one of our busiest times of the year.

211 is an important portal into many government services, and it deserves support from our legislature. I encourage you to pass SB 2152 for the citizens of North Dakota.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Adam Hamm  
Insurance Commissioner

C: Cindy Miller, 211/FirstLink



**[www.myfirstlink.org](http://www.myfirstlink.org)**

FirstLink's HotLine was incorporated in 1971 to ensure people have 24 hour listening, support, information, and referral about nonprofit human service resources. In 2010 the Public Service Commission designated FirstLink as the 2-1-1 provider for the entire state of North Dakota. FirstLink had previously subcontracted with MHAND to take 2-1-1 calls for Cass County, North Dakota.

**Who needs FirstLink?**

- All people...anywhere in North Dakota anytime!
- People who need resources and referrals
- People who are negatively impacted by the economy
- People with mental health issues
- People from rural communities where fewer resources may be available
- People from large communities where many resources are available

**What services does FirstLink offer?**

**FirstLink 2-1-1 is a free hotline answered 24 hours a day providing:**

- Listening and support– a nonjudgmental, supportive, listening ear
- Information and referral about human service resources

**Common referrals include, but are not limited to:**

- Addictions
- Disasters
- Emergency Shelters
- Financial Assistance
- Military/Veteran Support
- Support Groups
- Volunteer Opportunities

**FirstLink's funding sources:**

FirstLink's main funding source has been through the United Way of Cass-Clay. They have and will continue to support FirstLink's 2-1-1 HotLine, Suicide Lifeline and suicide services for the Cass-Clay communities. Currently 2-1-1 statewide funding has been received from the North Dakota Department of Health, North Dakota Department of Human Services, and other United Ways from across the state. The current state support is done June 30, 2011. The demand for services provided by FirstLink to North Dakota residents continues to increase, while funding declines.

### **Why should the state invest in FirstLink 2-1-1?**

North Dakota's 2-1-1 service is in jeopardy without state funding. 2-1-1 is a free, easy to remember three digit number that is available 24/7 to the ENTIRE state of North Dakota. Now is the time to invest in FirstLink. This will assure that all citizens have information about services available to them, and will have the ability to talk to someone who is nonjudgmental. FirstLink is also connected to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. All FirstLink staff are trained in suicide intervention skills. FirstLink is the only call center in the state of North Dakota that takes calls on this designated suicide lifeline. The national network assures that no call for help goes unanswered.

### **FirstLink makes a difference: (stats from 2010)**

- FirstLink 2-1-1 deescalated hundred's of callers who were suicidal and needed a safe place to call to collaborate on a safety plan.
- These calls saved North Dakota law enforcement, fire departments, dispatch centers, and EMT's hundred's of hours of time. By calling FirstLink these departments did not need to dispatch help for welfare checks, or spend time deescalating citizens.
- FirstLink 2-1-1 gives social service agencies a place for their clients to call for listening and support on evenings and weekends.
- FirstLink 2-1-1 gave shelter and financial information to help keep citizens safe and off of the streets.
- FirstLink 2-1-1 made over 15,440 referrals.
- FirstLink 2-1-1 gave hope to 35,820 callers who needed assistance.
- FirstLink received 796 calls related to suicide on all phone lines.
- FirstLink 2-1-1 answered calls from all 53 counties in North Dakota.

FirstLink's mission is to assist people in identifying, accessing, and making effective use of community and volunteer resources.

**\* See attached FirstLink brochure**



A free HotLine  
answered 24 hours a day.  
2-1-1 offers:

- Listening & Support  
2-1-1 provides a supportive,  
non-judgmental listening ear.
- Information & Referral  
2-1-1's database contains  
primarily nonprofit human  
service resources in North  
Dakota and Clay County,  
Minnesota.

Individuals are welcome to call  
about a variety of needs including,  
but not limited to:

- Addictions
- Disasters
- Emergency Shelters
- Financial Assistance
- Food Assistance
- Military Support
- Support Groups
- Volunteer Opportunities



[www.myfirstlink.org](http://www.myfirstlink.org)

PO Box 447

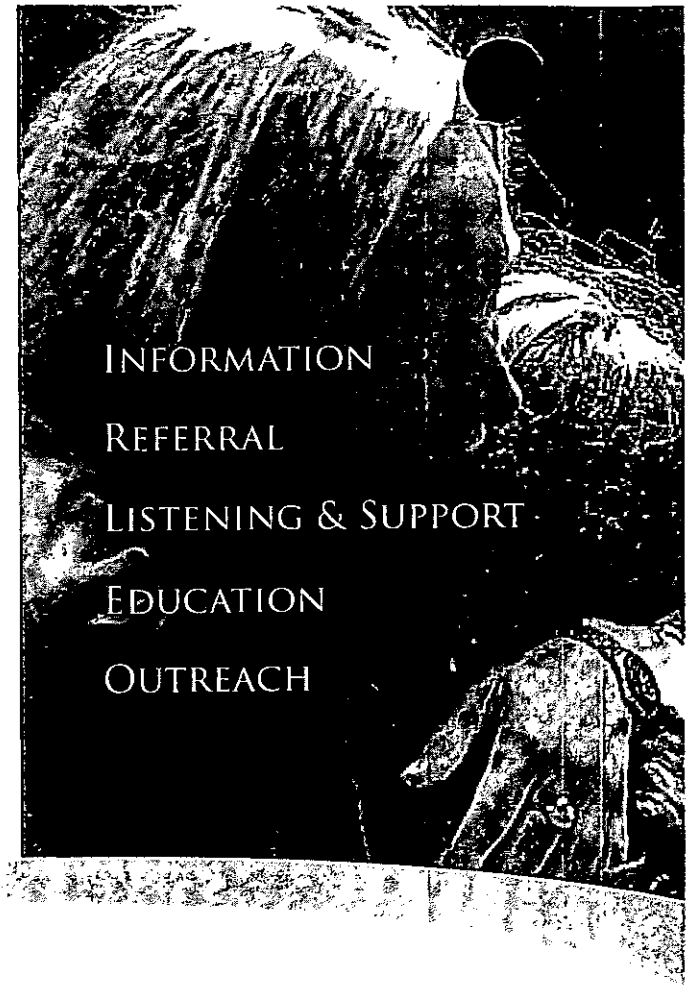
Fargo, ND 58107-0447

HotLine: 2-1-1  
or 701-235-SEEK (7335)

Suicide Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Fax: 701-235-2476

Admin Office: 701-293-6462



INFORMATION

REFERRAL

LISTENING & SUPPORT

EDUCATION

OUTREACH





## GIVING TREE OF HOPE

Giving Tree of Hope's primary goal is to offer assistance to those in need during the holiday season. We are dedicated to coordinating the collection and distribution of new donated items to meet the needs of individuals in the Cass-Clay community.

## 2-1-1 HOTLINE

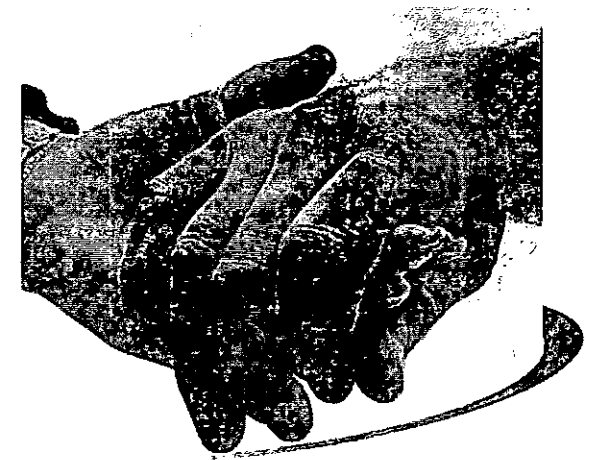
FirstLink strives to be the first point of contact for information and referral, listening and support, and military/veteran support.

FirstLink's HotLine is a free service available 24/7 to the public. Call Specialists offer supportive, non-judgmental listening ears and provide information about community programs. To reach the HotLine, dial 2-1-1 or 701-235-SEEK (7335). The resources can also be accessed online at [www.myfirstlink.org](http://www.myfirstlink.org).

FirstLink has been providing this service to Cass County, North Dakota and Clay County, Minnesota since 1970. In 2010 FirstLink became the designated 2-1-1 provider for the entire state of North Dakota.

FirstLink also provides unique suicide services, including Suicide Survivors' Support Group, Suicide Education Outreach, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), and Suicide Lifeline.

If you or someone you know are having thoughts of suicide dial 1-800-273-TALK (8255) to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 24 hours a day. FirstLink is the only NSPL call center in North Dakota.



## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Behind the ideas and efforts of building a better world, volunteers fuel a movement of compassion and connection. FirstLink acts as the vital link between volunteers and nonprofit organizations. The Volunteer Center provides easy access to a wide range of volunteer opportunities at nonprofit organizations and local government agencies. FirstLink also provides training, resources, and assistance to nonprofit organizations utilizing volunteers. To volunteer go to [www.myfirstlink.org](http://www.myfirstlink.org) or call 2-1-1.

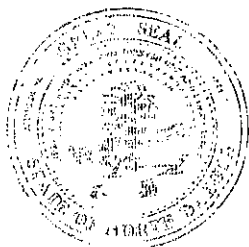
**TESTIMONY**  
**Senate Bill 2152 – Department of Emergency Services**  
**Senate Human Services Committee**  
**Senator Lee, Chairman**  
**January 19, 2011**

Chairman Lee and members of the Senate Human Services Committee, my name is Susan Rae Helgeland. I am Executive Director of Mental Health America of North Dakota (MHAND). Our Mission is: *to promote mental health through education, advocacy, understanding and access to quality care for all individuals.*

I am here today to support the appropriation to the Department of Emergency Services for a grant to administer statewide **2-1-1** services.

MHAND was the previous organization responsible for administering statewide **2-1-1** services. We have been involved with advocating for this important service since 2003 and we know it saves lives. **2-1-1** is an easy to remember number that provides vital information and referral services to all North Dakotans — 24 hours a day, every day and in times of crisis.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions.



# North Dakota Insurance Department

Adam W. Hamm, Commissioner

#3

January 7, 2011

Sen. Judy Lee, Chairman  
Human Services Committee  
North Dakota State Capital  
600 E. Boulevard Ave.  
Bismarck, ND 58505

Dear Sen. Lee:


In March 2010, a group of state agencies and nonprofits worked together to keep 211 going statewide after an announcement that its funding would not last through the end of the year. Now the legislature has the opportunity to revive this vital service long-term.

211 is an important statewide resource. It provided essential services to North Dakotans on behalf of the Insurance Department during the last two Medicare Part D annual enrollment periods. Nearly 2,000 beneficiaries called 211 in 2009 and 2010 to take advantage of the convenient service. By handling those calls, 211 enabled our Department to help even more North Dakotans during one of our busiest times of the year.

211 is an important portal into many government services, and it deserves support from our legislature. I encourage you to pass SB 2152 for the citizens of North Dakota.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Adam Hamm  
Insurance Commissioner

C: Cindy Miller, 211/FirstLink



NORTH DAKOTA  
LEAGUE of CITIES  
*Founded in 1912*

*Service, Advocacy, Leadership,  
Education & Support*

Senate Human Services  
SB 2152  
January 19, 2011

211 provides an important service to those in need of information or support in a time of need. In addition to its traditional information and referral services, 211 also plays a crucial role in our state's ability to respond to disaster.

During the spring of 2009, North Dakota experienced a record-setting statewide flood. As the floodwaters began to rise in communities throughout the state, it became apparent that a hotline was needed to provide information and coordinate donations and volunteers. 211 agreed to step in and provide this vital link, ultimately taking thousands of calls and coordinating thousands of volunteers and donations. There was no other organization in the state set up with the infrastructure, staff and training to answer this need at a moment's notice.

The continuation of 211 services in our state is essential for information, referral, and crisis management services, as well as additional services in the event of disaster. Please grant a "do pass" to SB 2152.

Sincerely,  
Connie Sprynczynatyk, Executive Director  
North Dakota League of Cities





# Public Service Commission

## State of North Dakota

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### COMMISSIONERS

Kevin Cramer  
Tony Clark  
Brian P. Kalk

Executive Secretary  
Darrell Nitschke

600 E. Boulevard Ave. Dept 408  
Bismarck, North Dakota 58505-0480  
Web: [www.nd.gov/psc](http://www.nd.gov/psc)  
E-mail: [ndpsc@nd.gov](mailto:ndpsc@nd.gov)  
Phone 701-328-2400  
Toll Free 1-877-245-6685  
Fax 701-328-2410  
TDD 800-366-6888 or 711

18 January 2011

Honorable Judy Lee, Chairman  
Human Services Committee  
North Dakota Senate  
600 East Boulevard Avenue  
Bismarck, ND 58505

Re: Senate Bill 2152

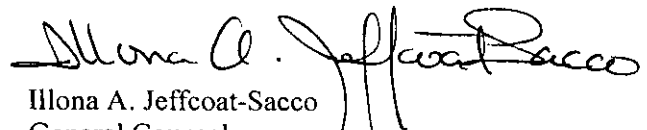
Dear Chairman Lee:

The Public Service Commission strongly supports funding for statewide 2-1-1 service.

The Public Service Commission designated FirstLink as North Dakota's 2-1-1 provider in March 2010 (a copy of the Commission's order is attached). As you can see from the history summarized in the Order, sufficient funding is crucial to any effort to provide 2-1-1 service to North Dakota residents.

Thank you for your consideration of the proposal to fund a statewide 2-1-1 program. We ask for your favorable action on SB 2152. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call or e-mail.

Best regards,

  
Ilona A. Jeffcoat-Sacco  
General Counsel  
[ijs@nd.gov](mailto:ijs@nd.gov)

c:/w/encl. Senator Gerald Uglem, Vice Chairman  
Senator Spencer D. Berry  
Senator Dick Dever  
Senator Tim Mathern

**STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA**  
**PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

**FirstLink  
211 Designation  
Application**

**Case No. PU-09-713**

**ORDER DESIGNATING STATEWIDE 211 DIALING CODE USER**

**March 18, 2010**

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has designated the 211 dialing code to provide direct access to organizations providing community information and referral services that are currently not available through the 911 emergency code or the 311 police non-emergency code.

On September 24, 2003, the Commission designated the Mental Health Association in North Dakota (MHAND), as the user of the 211 dialing code statewide in North Dakota.

On March 7, 2007, the Commission authorized MHAND to subcontract 211 operations in North Dakota. MHAND subcontracted with FirstLink for the provision of 211 in Cass County.

In its October 30, 2009 letter, MHAND notified the Commission that, due to lack of economic support, it must relinquish its designation as the 211 dialing code user.

On November 2, 2009, the Commission received a letter stating that effective October 30, 2009, FirstLink will temporarily provide statewide 211 operations for North Dakota until a decision is made about 211's future. FirstLink subsequently indicated it would provide statewide 211 operations until March 15, 2010.

On November 23, 2009, FirstLink filed a letter requesting designation as the 211 dialing code user for North Dakota.

On November 25, 2009, the Commission issued a Notice of Opportunity for Hearing providing until January 8, 2010 for comments and requests for hearing. No comments or requests for hearing were received.

On January 14 and January 25, 2010, FirstLink filed affidavits of Cindy Miller, Executive Director of FirstLink, in support of the application. The January 25 affidavit stated that FirstLink is no longer interested in a statewide 211 designation due to a lack of stable long-term funding for the entire state. However, FirstLink would like to be the designated user of the 211 dialing code in Cass County.

On February 10, 2010, the Commission authorized FirstLink to use the 211 dialing code in Cass County.

On February 19, 2010, a meeting of stakeholders was held to assess support for statewide 211 services going forward.

On February 19, 2010, the Commission issued a Notice of Intent to Reopen Proceeding because it had reason to believe that conditions of fact had changed and public interest required the reopening of the proceeding. The Notice listed the following issues:

1. Is any other entity interested in designation as the user of the 211 dial code in North Dakota?
2. Is FirstLink's intended use of the 211 dial code in North Dakota consistent with the FCC intended use of that code?
3. Is it in the public interest for the Commission to authorize FirstLink statewide use of the 211 dialing code, effective when FirstLink's 211 services are sufficiently funded?

On March 4, 2010, another meeting of stakeholders was held to assess support for statewide 211 services.

On March 11, 2010, FirstLink filed an affidavit of Cindy Miller supporting the application and requesting that the Commission authorize FirstLink as the statewide user of the 211 dialing code.

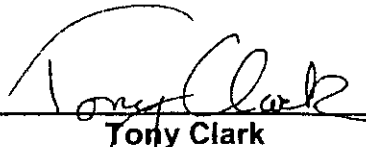
FirstLink's intended use of the 211 dialing code is to create and maintain a database of programs and services, and then to disseminate this information to individuals that dial the 211 code. FirstLink employs trained call specialists to answer information, referral, crisis, listening and support calls. FirstLink is certified in Alliance of Information and Referral Systems and has been a call center for many years.

FirstLink's intended use of the 211 dial code in Cass County is consistent with the FCC intended use of that code and should be designated for such use. It is in the public interest for the Commission to authorize FirstLink statewide use of the 211 dialing code.

#### Order

FirstLink is authorized to use the 211 dialing code in North Dakota for access to community information and referral services.

#### PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

  
Tony Clark  
Commissioner

  
Absent  
Kevin Cramer  
Chairman

  
Brian P. Kalk  
Commissioner

**From:** Chamberlin, Sara E.  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 20, 2011 9:12 AM  
**To:** Lee, Judy E.  
**Subject:** SB2152 - FirstLink 211 Program Funding Bill Draft

Senator Lee,

I will contact Cindy Miller to explain the funding amount provided in Senate Bill No. 2152, but I wanted you to also know the rationale behind the \$640,000 appropriation.

The appropriation is less than the amount requested (\$775,910) because of the amount of funding that state agencies anticipate providing to FirstLink for contracted services in the 2011-13 biennium (\$136,498). The following e-mail explains the appropriation amount.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

**Sara E. Chamberlin**  
*North Dakota Legislative Council- Fiscal Analyst*  
701.328.3729

**From:** Chamberlin, Sara E.  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 04, 2010 10:15 AM  
**To:** Lee, Judy E.  
**Cc:** Knudson, Allen H.  
**Subject:** FirstLink 211 Program Funding Bill Draft

Senator Lee,

In regards to your requested bill draft for 211 funding, FirstLink has provided the following estimated 2011-13 biennium funding request for the state 211 program:

	2011-13 Biennium
Personnel	\$344,400
Operating	131,500
Marketing	300,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$775,910</b>

The chart below provides information on funding that state agencies anticipate providing to FirstLink for contracted services in the 2011-13 biennium:

Agency	State Funding
Adjutant General	\$70,000 <sup>1</sup>
Department of Health	0
Department of Human Services	51,498
Insurance Department	15,000 <sup>2</sup>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$136,498</b>
<sup>1</sup> The Adjutant General may provide some of this funding in the 2009-11 biennium. If so, the amount for the 2011-13 biennium would decrease.	
<sup>2</sup> The Insurance Department renews this contract on an annual basis and could choose a different provider.	

Based on this information, FirstLink would need additional funding of \$640,000 to operate the state 211 program. In order to prepare a bill draft to provide a state grant to FirstLink, can you tell me the agency you would like to administer the grant and a source of funding you would like to use? Any of the agencies listed could be provided the funding and directed to administer the grant. Options for a funding source include the general fund, permanent oil tax trust fund, or the community health trust fund. Of these options, the general fund may be preferred if it is your intent that this grant be continued in future bienniums rather than a one-time funding amount.

Please let me know how you would like to proceed or if you have any questions.

**Sara E. Chamberlin**

*North Dakota Legislative Council- Fiscal Analyst*

701.328.3729

**TESTIMONY**  
**Senate Bill 2152 - Department of Emergency Services**  
**Senate Appropriations – Chairman Ray Holmberg**  
**Harvest Room**  
**February 4, 2011**

Chairman Holmberg and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, my name is Tom Regan. I am a member of the Board of Directors of Mental Health America of North Dakota (MHAND). Our Mission: *to promote mental health through advocacy, education, understanding and access to quality care for all individuals.*

I am here today to support the appropriation to the Department of Emergency Services for a grant to administer statewide **2-1-1** services.

MHAND was the previous organization responsible for administering statewide **2-1-1** services. We have been involved with advocating for this important service since 2003, and we know it saves lives. **2-1-1** is an easy to remember number that provides vital information and referral services to all North Dakotans – 24 hours a day, every day and in times of crisis.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.



**[www.myfirstlink.org](http://www.myfirstlink.org)**

FirstLink's HotLine was incorporated in 1971 to ensure people have 24 hour listening, support, information, and referral about nonprofit human service resources. In 2010 the Public Service Commission designated FirstLink as the 2-1-1 provider for the entire state of North Dakota. FirstLink had previously subcontracted with MHAND to take 2-1-1 calls for Cass County, North Dakota.

**Who needs FirstLink?**

- All people...anywhere in North Dakota anytime!
- People who need resources and referrals
- People who are negatively impacted by the economy
- People with mental health issues
- People from rural communities where fewer resources may be available
- People from large communities where many resources are available

**What services does FirstLink offer?**

**FirstLink 2-1-1 is a free hotline answered 24 hours a day providing:**

- Listening and support— a nonjudgmental, supportive, listening ear
- Information and referral about human service resources

**Common referrals include, but are not limited to:**

- Addictions
- Disasters
- Emergency Shelters
- Financial Assistance
- Military/Veteran Support
- Support Groups
- Volunteer Opportunities

**FirstLink's funding sources:**

FirstLink's main funding source has been through the United Way of Cass-Clay. They have and will continue to support FirstLink's 2-1-1 HotLine, Suicide Lifeline and suicide services for the Cass-Clay communities. Currently 2-1-1 statewide funding has been received from the North Dakota Department of Health, North Dakota Department of Human Services, and other United Ways from across the state. The current state support is done June 30, 2011. The demand for services provided by FirstLink to North Dakota residents continues to increase, while funding declines.

2

### **Why should the state invest in FirstLink 2-1-1?**

North Dakota's 2-1-1 service is in jeopardy without state funding. 2-1-1 is a free, easy to remember three digit number that is available 24/7 to the ENTIRE state of North Dakota. Now is the time to invest in FirstLink. This will assure that all citizens have information about services available to them, and will have the ability to talk to someone who is nonjudgmental. FirstLink is also connected to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. All FirstLink staff are trained in suicide intervention skills. FirstLink is the only call center in the state of North Dakota that takes calls on this designated suicide lifeline. The national network assures that no call for help goes unanswered.

### **FirstLink makes a difference: (stats from 2010)**

- FirstLink 2-1-1 deescalated hundred's of callers who were suicidal and needed a safe place to call to collaborate on a safety plan.
- These calls saved North Dakota law enforcement, fire departments, dispatch centers, and EMT's hundred's of hours of time. By calling FirstLink these departments did not need to dispatch help for welfare checks, or spend time deescalating citizens.
- FirstLink 2-1-1 gives social service agencies a place for their clients to call for listening and support on evenings and weekends.
- FirstLink 2-1-1 gave shelter and financial information to help keep citizens safe and off of the streets.
- FirstLink 2-1-1 made over 15,440 referrals.
- FirstLink 2-1-1 gave hope to 35,820 callers who needed assistance.
- FirstLink received 796 calls related to suicide on all phone lines.
- FirstLink 2-1-1 answered calls from all 53 counties in North Dakota.

FirstLink's mission is to assist people in identifying, accessing, and making effective use of community and volunteer resources

**\* See attached FirstLink brochure**





Senate Bill #2152

Senate Appropriations Committee

February 4, 2011

Chairman Holmberg and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee. I am Cindy Miller, Executive Director of FirstLink. I am here today to ask you to support SB #2152 requesting \$775,910 in funding for the upcoming biennium for the purpose of supporting and maintaining 2-1-1 service statewide.

FirstLink's HotLine was incorporated in 1971 and continues to ensure people have access to 24 hour information and referral about nonprofit human service and emergency resources as well as listening and support. Previously, FirstLink subcontracted with MHAND to take 2-1-1 calls for Cass County. But in October of 2009, we received a call stating MHAND was closing their doors October 31, 2009. They wanted to know if we could continue the 2-1-1 statewide service. Our board believed in the importance of 2-1-1 and knew that to restart a program would be extremely challenging and detrimental to people in North Dakota who rely on the service. So we decided to do whatever it took to continue 2-1-1 service statewide... at least temporarily.

We asked the Public Service Commissioners if they could assist us in seeking financial assistance. If we could get financial help we would love to be the designated 2-1-1 provider for the entire state of North Dakota. When concerned groups gathered, the stories we heard about the importance of continuing 2-1-1 was amazing.

This is why I am here today! This service is our mission and passion and has been for 40 years. FirstLink is a highly qualified 2-1-1 call center. In 2009 they coordinated over 100,000 volunteers and answered over 50,000 calls on a volunteer flood hotline related to disaster preparation and clean-up. FirstLink has the ability to assist as needed in disasters through contracts and through 2-1-1. FirstLink 2-1-1 can assist callers who have

experienced a disaster and are in need of resources and referrals to help them get through such difficult times.

Where does FirstLink 2-1-1 currently receive most of its funding?

FirstLink's main funding source has been through the United Way of Cass-Clay. They have and will continue to support FirstLink's 2-1-1 HotLine, Suicide Lifeline, and suicide services for the Cass-Clay communities. FirstLink has contracts with Cass County, Clay County, and the Cities of Fargo, Moorhead and West Fargo to provide disaster services. They also have contracts with various human service agencies to provide crisis support after hours. All government, human service, and nonprofit agencies can register their information with the FirstLink 2-1-1 database at no cost. But we also have contracts with agencies like the North Dakota Insurance Commission, and Southeast Human Service Center, to name a few, to do intake forms and have special contracts to assist their clients. Currently 2-1-1 statewide funding has been received from the North Dakota Department of Health, North Dakota Department of Human Services, and other United Ways from across the state. The current state support is done June 30, 2011. The demand for services provided by FirstLink to North Dakota residents continues to increase, while funding declines.

Why should the state invest in FirstLink 2-1-1?

North Dakota's 2-1-1 service is in jeopardy without state funding.

2-1-1 is a free, easy to remember three digit number that is available 24/7 to the ENTIRE state of North Dakota. Now is the time to invest in FirstLink 2-1-1. This will assure that all citizens have information about services available to them, including disaster preparation and relief services.

At the moment North Dakota's 2-1-1 service also benefits from FirstLink's partnership with the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255 (TALK). At FirstLink all call specialists that answer 2-1-1 also answer the suicide lifeline. Therefore, FirstLink 2-1-1 call specialists are not only trained in information and referral, but also in crisis and suicide prevention. FirstLink has found this training to be significantly beneficial since

2-1-1 callers can very easily turning to suicidal callers. FirstLink is the only call center in the state of North Dakota that takes calls on this designated national suicide lifeline. The national network assures that no call for help goes unanswered. FirstLink deescalated hundred's of callers who were suicidal and needed a safe place to call to collaborate on a safety plan. These calls saved North Dakota law enforcement, fire departments, dispatch centers, and EMT's hundred's of hours of time.

There are letters of support in your packets, and brochures with more details about FirstLink 2-1-1. Statistics from 2010 are on the back of the buff flyer in your packet. We served all 53 counties in 2010 and answered more than 35,800 calls.

Chairman Holmberg, thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee today. If you have any questions I will be happy to respond.

Cindy Miller  
FirstLink Executive Director  
(701)-293-6462  
cindym@myfirstlink.org

**From:** Chamberlin, Sara E. [mailto:schamberlin@nd.gov]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 20, 2011 9:16 AM  
**To:** Cindy Miller  
**Subject:** SB2152 - FirstLink 211 Program Funding Bill Draft

Good Morning Cindy,

Senator Lee said you had a question regarding the \$640,000 appropriation provided in Senate Bill No. 2152.

The appropriation is less than the amount requested (\$775,910) because of the amount of funding that state agencies anticipate providing to FirstLink for contracted services in the 2011-13 biennium (\$136,498). The following tables explain the appropriation amount.

FirstLink Requested Funding	2011-13 Biennium
Personnel	\$344,400
Operating	131,500
Marketing	300,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$775,910</b>

Funding from State Agencies	State Funding
Adjutant General	\$70,000 <sup>1</sup>
Department of Health	0
Department of Human Services	51,498
Insurance Department	15,000 <sup>2</sup>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$136,498</b>

I'd be happy to go over this, please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,  
 Sara

**Sara E. Chamberlin**  
*North Dakota Legislative Council- Fiscal Analyst*  
 701.328.3729

**Cindy Miller**

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**From:** Chamberlin, Sara E. [schamberlin@nd.gov]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 31, 2011 3:54 PM  
**To:** Cindy Miller  
**Subject:** RE: SB2152 - FirstLink 211 Program Funding Bill Draft

Good Afternoon,

When the bill was drafted state agencies were contacted to provide their estimated 2011-13 funding for 211 related services. The chart provided below was what agencies responded with.

Funding from State Agencies	State Funding
Adjutant General	\$70,000 <sup>1</sup>
Department of Health	0
Department of Human Services	51,498
Insurance Department	15,000 <sup>2</sup>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$136,498</b>

The Department of Emergency Services responded that their intent was to award EMPG grant funds for a two year period at approximately \$35,000 per year. The services will be for 211 to manage and facilitate the Vulnerable Population registry.

The Department of Human Services responded that their intention was to continue the following programs in the 2011-13 biennium.

**DHS Contracts with First Link**

Contracts	Services	Contract Term	Amount
Southeast Human Service Center	24 hour emergency telephone answering and intervention services for Region 5	July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2011	35,74
Economic Assistance Policy	Referral Services for individuals calling about alternatives to abortion	July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2011	8,550
Mental Health / Substance Abuse	Referral Services for those with Mental health or addiction needs	April 1, 2010 - June 30, 2011	<u>7,200</u>
Total all DHS contracts			51,498

Please let me know if you have any questions.

2/3/2011

Jack Dalrymple Governor



Becky Sevart, Chair

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**TESTIMONY: SENATE BILL 2152  
SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
RAY HOLMBERG, CHAIRMAN  
FEBRUARY 4, 2011**

Under the mandate outlined in Public Law 102-321 (42 U.S.C 300X-4), a twenty-seven member board -- the North Dakota Mental Health Planning Council -- was created with members appointed by the Governor of North Dakota. The Council's objective is to:

- Review community mental health block grant plans and make recommendations to the State administration.
- Monitor, review and evaluate all mental health services throughout the State or Territory.
- Serve as advocated for adults with serious mental illnesses, children with severe emotional disturbances, and others with mental health needs.

The North Dakota Mental Health Planning Council is in support this bill. 211 provides a vital link for individuals across North Dakota, providing information relating to health and human services, including suicide prevention; mental health; gambling addiction; services for elderly citizens and citizens with disabilities; and support for active military, veterans, and military families. The Council believes this is an important component in the system of care and encourages passage of this bill.

Thank you for your time and we appreciate your work for the people of North Dakota.



## Public Service Commission State of North Dakota

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### COMMISSIONERS

Kevin Cramer  
Tony Clark  
Brian P. Kalk

Executive Secretary  
Darrell Nitschke

600 E. Boulevard Ave. Dept 408  
Bismarck, North Dakota 58505-0480  
Web: [www.nd.gov/psc](http://www.nd.gov/psc)  
E-mail: [ndpsc@nd.gov](mailto:ndpsc@nd.gov)  
Phone 701-328-2400  
Toll Free 1-877-245-6685  
Fax 701-328-2410  
TDD 800-366-6888 or 711

18 January 2011

Honorable Judy Lee, Chairman  
Human Services Committee  
North Dakota Senate  
600 East Boulevard Avenue  
Bismarck, ND 58505

Re: Senate Bill 2152

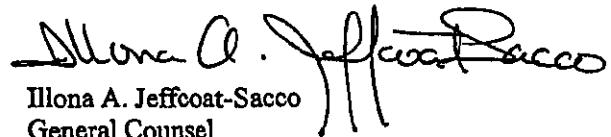
Dear Chairman Lee:

The Public Service Commission strongly supports funding for statewide 2-1-1 service.

The Public Service Commission designated FirstLink as North Dakota's 2-1-1 provider in March 2010 (a copy of the Commission's order is attached). As you can see from the history summarized in the Order, sufficient funding is crucial to any effort to provide 2-1-1 service to North Dakota residents.

Thank you for your consideration of the proposal to fund a statewide 2-1-1 program. We ask for your favorable action on SB 2152. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call or e-mail.

Best regards,

  
Illona A. Jeffcoat-Sacco  
General Counsel  
[ijjs@nd.gov](mailto:ijjs@nd.gov)

c:w/encl. Senator Gerald Uglen, Vice Chairman  
Senator Spencer D. Berry  
Senator Dick Dever  
Senator Tim Mathern



# North Dakota Insurance Department

Adam W. Hamm, Commissioner

January 7, 2011

Sen. Judy Lee, Chairman  
Human Services Committee  
North Dakota State Capital  
600 E. Boulevard Ave.  
Bismarck, ND 58505

Dear Sen. Lee:

In March 2010, a group of state agencies and nonprofits worked together to keep 211 going statewide after an announcement that its funding would not last through the end of the year. Now the legislature has the opportunity to revive this vital service long-term.

211 is an important statewide resource. It provided essential services to North Dakotans on behalf of the Insurance Department during the last two Medicare Part D annual enrollment periods. Nearly 2,000 beneficiaries called 211 in 2009 and 2010 to take advantage of the convenient service. By handling those calls, 211 enabled our Department to help even more North Dakotans during one of our busiest times of the year.

211 is an important portal into many government services, and it deserves support from our legislature. I encourage you to pass SB 2152 for the citizens of North Dakota.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Adam Hamm  
Insurance Commissioner

C: Cindy Miller, 211/FirstLink





# NORTH DAKOTA LEAGUE of CITIES

*Founded in 1912*

*Service, Advocacy, Leadership,  
Education & Support*

Senate Human Services

SB 2152

January 19, 2011

211 provides an important service to those in need of information or support in a time of need. In addition to its traditional information and referral services, 211 also plays a crucial role in our state's ability to respond to disaster.

During the spring of 2009, North Dakota experienced a record-setting statewide flood. As the floodwaters began to rise in communities throughout the state, it became apparent that a hotline was needed to provide information and coordinate donations and volunteers. 211 agreed to step in and provide this vital link, ultimately taking thousands of calls and coordinating thousands of volunteers and donations. There was no other organization in the state set up with the infrastructure, staff and training to answer this need at a moment's notice.

The continuation of 211 services in our state is essential for information, referral, and crisis management services, as well as additional services in the event of disaster. Please grant a "do pass" to SB 2152.

Sincerely,  
Connie Sprynczynatyk, Executive Director  
North Dakota League of Cities



Richard Griffin  
President, Lodge #1

**RED RIVER LODGE #1**  
**ND FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE**

P.O. Box 962 \* Fargo \* North Dakota \* 58107-0962



Dear Senator Judy Lee,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Fraternal Order of Police, Red River Valley Lodge #1 in support of Senate Bill number #2152. This bill is focused on the continuation of the 211 services for the State of North Dakota.

The Fraternal Order of Police, Red River Valley Lodge #1 has over 200 members in Cass County and represents Federal, State, and Local law enforcement officers.

The passage of this bill would allow FirstLink to continue to provide suicide and crisis intervention, information and referral services, and the organization of volunteers. The 211 service has proven to be a great resource for law enforcement officers and citizens of North Dakota. Often times law enforcement personnel are contacted by FirstLink to respond to individuals in crisis that are threatening suicide. Because of the service FirstLink provides, many lives have been affected in a positive manner. FirstLink is recognized nationally for suicide intervention and rescue services it provides.

On behalf of the Fraternal Order of Police, Red River Valley Lodge #1 we thank you for your support of this bill.

Sincerely,

Patrick Hanson  
Secretary  
Red River Valley Lodge #1  
PO BOX 962  
Fargo, ND 58107

**BUILDING ON A PROUD TRADITION**

Dear Senator Judy Lee,

I am writing to you about a bill that I strongly support:

- SB #2152 which affects ND 211 SERVICE provided by FirstLink.

This bill would allow the ND 211 system to continue as statewide wide service that gives all North Dakotans access to listening and support, crisis intervention and resource and referral services provided by FirstLink.

FirstLink has a long history in the Fargo area for providing the services I have listed along with a wide variety of community services and educational programs.

Nationally FirstLink is recognized for its suicide intervention and rescue services it provides as part of its day to day operation.

I have been able to work with FirstLink and its staff since 2002 in many different capacities both during their day to day operations and during emergency operations.

During 3 different spring floods I have worked side by side with FirstLink Staff and members of our community using the services set up and operated by FirstLink. A very large gap was filled by the services and organizational skills provide by FirstLink the FM Area during our time of need.

SB #2152 will help to support ND 211 and all of the services provided by FirstLink.

Thank you for your support of this important program. Thanks, too, for all you do to serve the people of our district.

Sincerely,

Terry L. Styf 807 Elm Street West Fargo ND. 701-281-0379 [terry.styf@westfargond.gov](mailto:terry.styf@westfargond.gov)

**TESTIMONY**  
**Senate Bill 2152 – Department of Emergency Services**  
**Senate Human Services Committee**  
**Senator Lee, Chairman**  
**January 19, 2011**

Chairman Lee and members of the Senate Human Services Committee, my name is Susan Rae Helgeland. I am Executive Director of Mental Health America of North Dakota (MHAND). Our Mission is: *to promote mental health through education, advocacy, understanding and access to quality care for all individuals.*

I am here today to support the appropriation to the Department of Emergency Services for a grant to administer statewide **2-1-1** services.

MHAND was the previous organization responsible for administering statewide **2-1-1** services. We have been involved with advocating for this important service since 2003 and we know it saves lives. **2-1-1** is an easy to remember number that provides vital information and referral services to all North Dakotans — 24 hours a day, every day and in times of crisis.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions.

January 13, 2011

Senator Judy Lee  
1822 Brentwood Court  
West Fargo, ND 58078-4204

Dear Senator Lee:

United Way of Cass-Clay strongly encourages the support of SB#2152 to provide an appropriation to the Department of Emergency Services for a grant to administer 2-1-1 services in North Dakota.

Every hour of every day, someone in North Dakota needs essential services – from finding substance abuse services, to reporting a case of child abuse or neglect, to securing adequate care for an aging parent. Often times, people end up going without services because they do not know where to turn.

North Dakota has an active Call Center (FirstLink), but the Center lacks the resources needed to maintain appropriate staff levels and training, maintain the 24-hour-a-day services, and to ensure complete and accurate information databases needed to reach rural populations. Support of SB#2152 would provide the funding necessary to meet these needs.

2-1-1 is most effective when built on solid public/private partnerships and with a diverse and sustainable funding base. Currently, in the state of North Dakota, 2-1-1 is funded through private sources, including United Ways and other nonprofits, foundations, businesses and fee-for-service contracts.

State funding for 2-1-1 will supplement, not replace, those funding streams.

United Way of Cass-Clay provides annual funding in the amount of \$170,000 to Firstlink for the provision of 2-1-1 services and \$60,000 for Volunteer Center services in Cass County, ND and Clay County, MN. Our community is providing adequate private funding for 2-1-1. There is, however, a lack of funding for other ND communities, including vast rural areas that have no access to services or information.

Another benefit of 2-1-1 to ND taxpayers is the reduction of the number of non-emergency calls to 9-1-1 and the emergency services providers in all North Dakota communities. This reduces the burden for 9-1-1 dispatchers across the state and often times ensures that more appropriate telephone listening and support, crisis intervention and suicide prevention services are provided.

Senator Judy Lee  
Page 2

As of April 2010, 2-1-1 served over 246 million Americans (more than 82% of the entire population) covering all or part of 47 states (including 33 states with 90% + coverage) plus Washington, DC and Puerto Rico. The remaining states are all in various stages of planning and implementation. Every few weeks, these coverage numbers increase.

Please let us know if we can provide any additional information. You may contact Thomas Hill at (701) 237-5050 or [thill@unitedwaycassclay.org](mailto:thill@unitedwaycassclay.org) or you may visit [www.211us.org](http://www.211us.org).

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Melinda Haun  
President

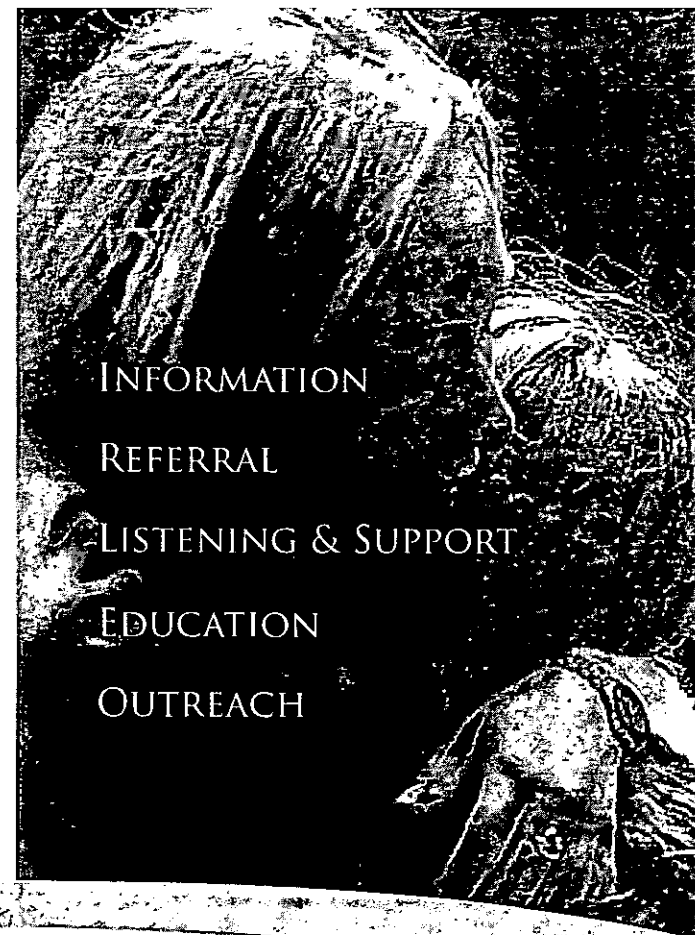


A free HotLine  
answered 24 hours a day.  
2-1-1 offers:

- Listening & Support  
2-1-1 provides a supportive,  
non-judgmental listening ear.
- Information & Referral  
2-1-1's database contains  
primarily nonprofit human  
service resources in North  
Dakota and Clay County,  
Minnesota.

Individuals are welcome to call  
about a variety of needs including,  
but not limited to:

- Addictions
- Disasters
- Emergency Shelters
- Financial Assistance
- Food Assistance
- Military Support
- Support Groups
- Volunteer Opportunities



INFORMATION

REFERRAL

LISTENING & SUPPORT

EDUCATION

OUTREACH

[www.myfirstlink.org](http://www.myfirstlink.org)

PO Box 447

Fargo, ND 58107-0447

HotLine: 2-1-1

or 701-235-SEEK (7335)

Suicide Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Fax: 701-235-2476

Admin Office: 701-293-6462





## GIVING TREE OF HOPE

Giving Tree of Hope's primary goal is to offer assistance to those in need during the holiday season. We are dedicated to coordinating the collection and distribution of new donated items to meet the needs of individuals in the Cass-Clay community.

## 2-1-1 HOTLINE

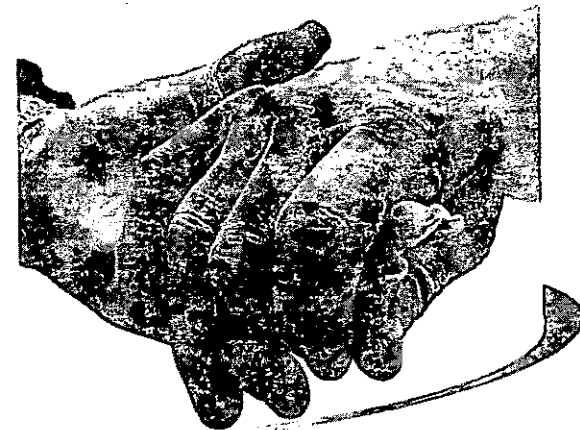
FirstLink strives to be the first point of contact for information and referral, listening and support, and military/veteran support.

FirstLink's HotLine is a free service available 24/7 to the public. Call Specialists offer supportive, non-judgmental listening ears and provide information about community programs. To reach the HotLine, dial 2-1-1 or 701-235-SEEK (7335). The resources can also be accessed online at [www.myfirstlink.org](http://www.myfirstlink.org).

FirstLink has been providing this service to Cass County, North Dakota and Clay County, Minnesota since 1970. In 2010 FirstLink became the designated 2-1-1 provider for the entire state of North Dakota.

FirstLink also provides unique suicide services, including Suicide Survivors' Support Group, Suicide Education Outreach, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), and Suicide Lifeline.

If you or someone you know are having thoughts of suicide dial 1-800-273-TALK (8255) to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 24 hours a day. FirstLink is the only NSPL call center in North Dakota.



## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Behind the ideas and efforts of building a better world, volunteers fuel a movement of compassion and connection. FirstLink acts as the vital link between volunteers and nonprofit organizations. The Volunteer Center provides easy access to a wide range of volunteer opportunities at nonprofit organizations and local government agencies. FirstLink also provides training, resources, and assistance to nonprofit organizations utilizing volunteers. To volunteer go to [www.myfirstlink.org](http://www.myfirstlink.org) or call 2-1-1.



## NORTH DAKOTA VETERANS COORDINATING COUNCIL

My name is John L. Jacobsen. I am the Chairman of the Legislative Committee of the North Dakota Veterans Coordinating Council. I am also a member of the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I served in the North Dakota National Guard and the US Army Reserve for a total of 30 years. I retired in 1995 as a Colonel. I served on Active Duty in 1991 during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm in the Persian Gulf, stationed in the United Arab Emirates.

The Coordinating Council is made up of 15 members, 3 from each of the five Veterans Organizations in North Dakota:

- American Legion
- AMVETS
- Disabled American Veterans
- Veterans of Foreign Wars
- Vietnam Veterans of America

It is the policy of the Coordinating Council to support legislation that will benefit the welfare of the members of the Armed Forces. The committee **MUST** concur totally, that is all 15 members must agree on the legislation to be supported or else it does not get the support.

In this case, I have been instructed to recommend to this legislative committee that a "DO PASS" on SB 2152 is supported by the Veterans Coordinating Council.

TESTIMONY – SB 2152  
SENATE - APPROPRIATION  
FEBRUARY 4, 2011  
BY GREG WILZ  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Ms. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Greg Wilz. I am the Deputy Director of the Department of Emergency Services (DES), and Director of Homeland Security Division. I offer testimony from a neutral perspective.

The Department of Emergency Services plans to use 211 of North Dakota to manage the information inputting process into the statewide voluntary database for people with disabilities and those who possess identified levels of vulnerability. Although the Department has been ready and able to fund this project for two years, it has been delayed due to software updates and interface requirements. A vendor search revealed 211, at that time under the Mental Health Association of North Dakota, was the only provider and a sole source contract was approved by the Office of Management and Budget. The availability of 211 in North Dakota is crucial for implementing the project to populate the statewide registry. The project will soon be ready for implementation.

The Department operates State Radio, a public service answering point for 22 counties and values 211 services which relieve non-emergency calls into the 911 communications center.

I will answer questions you may have.

*al*



# Public Service Commission

## State of North Dakota

### COMMISSIONERS

Kevin Cramer  
Tony Clark  
Brian P. Kalk

Executive Secretary  
Darrell Nitschke

600 E. Boulevard Ave. Dept 408  
Bismarck, North Dakota 58505-0480  
Web: [www.nd.gov/psc](http://www.nd.gov/psc)  
E-mail: [ndpsc@nd.gov](mailto:ndpsc@nd.gov)  
Phone 701-328-2400  
Toll Free 1-877-245-6685  
Fax 701-328-2410  
TDD 800-366-6888 or 711

2 February 2011

Honorable Ray Holmberg, Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
North Dakota Senate  
600 East Boulevard Avenue  
Bismarck, ND 58505

Re: Senate Bill 2152

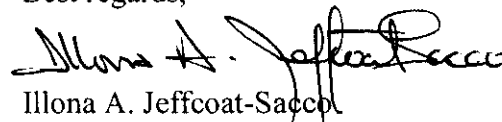
Dear Chairman Holmberg:

The Public Service Commission strongly supports funding for statewide 2-1-1 service.

The Public Service Commission designated FirstLink as North Dakota's 2-1-1 provider in March 2010 (a copy of the Commission's order is attached). As you can see from the history summarized in the Order, sufficient funding is crucial to any effort to provide 2-1-1 service to North Dakota residents.

Thank you for your consideration of the proposal to fund a statewide 2-1-1 program. We ask for your favorable action on SB 2152. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call or e-mail.

Best regards,

  
Illona A. Jeffcoat-Sacco  
General Counsel  
[ijs@nd.gov](mailto:ijs@nd.gov)

c:w/encl

Senator Bill Bowman, Co Vice Chairman  
Senator Tony Grindberg, Co Vice Chairman  
Senator Randel Christmann  
Senator Robert Erbele  
Senator Tom Fischer  
Senator Ralph L. Kilzer

Senator Karen K. Krebsbach  
Senator David O'Connell  
Senator Larry Robinson  
Senator Terry M. Wanzek  
Senator Rich Wardner  
Senator John Warner

**STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA**  
**PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

**FirstLink  
211 Designation  
Application**

**Case No. PU-09-713**

**ORDER DESIGNATING STATEWIDE 211 DIALING CODE USER**

**March 18, 2010**

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has designated the 211 dialing code to provide direct access to organizations providing community information and referral services that are currently not available through the 911 emergency code or the 311 police non-emergency code.

On September 24, 2003, the Commission designated the Mental Health Association in North Dakota (MHAND), as the user of the 211 dialing code statewide in North Dakota.

On March 7, 2007, the Commission authorized MHAND to subcontract 211 operations in North Dakota. MHAND subcontracted with FirstLink for the provision of 211 in Cass County.

In its October 30, 2009 letter, MHAND notified the Commission that, due to lack of economic support, it must relinquish its designation as the 211 dialing code user.

On November 2, 2009, the Commission received a letter stating that effective October 30, 2009, FirstLink will temporarily provide statewide 211 operations for North Dakota until a decision is made about 211's future. FirstLink subsequently indicated it would provide statewide 211 operations until March 15, 2010.

On November 23, 2009, FirstLink filed a letter requesting designation as the 211 dialing code user for North Dakota.

On November 25, 2009, the Commission issued a Notice of Opportunity for Hearing providing until January 8, 2010 for comments and requests for hearing. No comments or requests for hearing were received.

On January 14 and January 25, 2010, FirstLink filed affidavits of Cindy Miller, Executive Director of FirstLink, in support of the application. The January 25 affidavit stated that FirstLink is no longer interested in a statewide 211 designation due to a lack of stable long-term funding for the entire state. However, FirstLink would like to be the designated user of the 211 dialing code in Cass County.

On February 10, 2010, the Commission authorized FirstLink to use the 211 dialing code in Cass County.

On February 19, 2010, a meeting of stakeholders was held to assess support for statewide 211 services going forward.

On February 19, 2010, the Commission issued a Notice of Intent to Reopen Proceeding because it had reason to believe that conditions of fact had changed and public interest required the reopening of the proceeding. The Notice listed the following issues:

1. Is any other entity interested in designation as the user of the 211 dial code in North Dakota?
2. Is FirstLink's intended use of the 211 dial code in North Dakota consistent with the FCC intended use of that code?
3. Is it in the public interest for the Commission to authorize FirstLink statewide use of the 211 dialing code, effective when FirstLink's 211 services are sufficiently funded?

On March 4, 2010, another meeting of stakeholders was held to assess support for statewide 211 services.

On March 11, 2010, FirstLink filed an affidavit of Cindy Miller supporting the application and requesting that the Commission authorize FirstLink as the statewide user of the 211 dialing code.

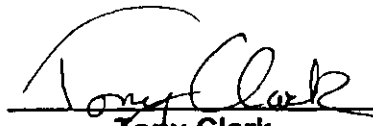
FirstLink's intended use of the 211 dialing code is to create and maintain a database of programs and services, and then to disseminate this information to individuals that dial the 211 code. FirstLink employs trained call specialists to answer information, referral, crisis, listening and support calls. FirstLink is certified in Alliance of Information and Referral Systems and has been a call center for many years.

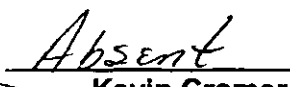
FirstLink's intended use of the 211 dial code in Cass County is consistent with the FCC intended use of that code and should be designated for such use. It is in the public interest for the Commission to authorize FirstLink statewide use of the 211 dialing code.

#### **Order**

FirstLink is authorized to use the 211 dialing code in North Dakota for access to community information and referral services.

#### **PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

  
**Tony Clark**  
Commissioner

  
**Kevin Cramer**  
Chairman

  
**Brian P. Kalk**  
Commissioner

## NDLA, S APP ASST

---

**From:** Holmberg, Ray E.  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 06, 2011 6:43 PM  
**To:** NDLA, S APP ASST; -Grp-NDLA Senate Appropriations  
**Cc:** Lee, Judy E.  
**Subject:** SB2152 - FirstLink 211 Program Funding Bill Draft  
**Attachments:** image004.jpg

Sen. Lee has shared this clarifying information about 2152.

Ray

---

**From:** Lee, Judy E.  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 06, 2011 6:40 PM  
**To:** Holmberg, Ray E.  
**Subject:** FW: SB2152 - FirstLink 211 Program Funding Bill Draft

Ray –

Please share this message with the subcommittee, or the whole committee, concerning the funding request for 2-1-1. I had had this discussion with Legislative Council about the difference in the funding amounts, but the thought that the contracts made up the difference. The message below explains that that is not the case.

Senator Judy Lee  
1822 Brentwood Court  
West Fargo, ND 58078  
Home phone: 701-282-6512  
e-mail: jlee@nd.gov

---

**From:** Cindy Miller [mailto:cindym@myfirstlink.org]  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 06, 2011 6:25 PM  
**To:** Lee, Judy E.  
**Cc:** mnaumann@alerusmail.com  
**Subject:** FW: SB2152 - FirstLink 211 Program Funding Bill Draft

I just wanted to clarify the funding amounts...I thought it was interesting that no one questioned that at the Friday hearing. We still are requesting \$775,910.

The monies that they listed below, are ones that we have special contracts with, and one of them is specifically for Cass County. (The Southeast Human Service one.) We have had this contract for after hours service with them for many, many years. This amount is figured in to our Cass County 2-1-1 budget.

The other ones we have not signed an agreement with yet. The \$70,000 one for NDDDES was promised last year and didn't come through. I am worried it will not come through again. At the hearing I stated that several of these contracts we have...like the one with the Insurance commission for \$7,500 per year, we need to hire extra staff to complete the intake forms, etc. So this is a contract that has extra expenses attached to it, and is not just regular 2-1-1 expenses. I am worried that the disability emergency intake grant would also require us to hire many more staff to handle the calls and intake forms, and if it generates lots of calls we may need to add lines etc.

I am not sure that this committee understood this, because no one asked why the amounts were different. Can you forward this to that subcommittee...and make sure they understand or contact me if they are unclear about our request?  
Thanks!

Thanks for your support!

Cindy Miller  
Executive Director



cindym@myfirstlink.org  
701-293-6462

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**From:** Chamberlin, Sara E. [mailto:schamberlin@nd.gov]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 31, 2011 3:54 PM  
**To:** Cindy Miller  
**Subject:** RE: SB2152 - FirstLink 211 Program Funding Bill Draft

Good Afternoon,

When the bill was drafted state agencies were contacted to provide their estimated 2011-13 funding for 211 related services. The chart provided below was what agencies responded with.

Funding from State Agencies	State Funding
Attorney General	\$70,000 <sup>1</sup>
Department of Health	0
Department of Human Services	51,498
Insurance Department	15,000 <sup>2</sup>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$136,498</b>

The Department of Emergency Services responded that their intent was to award EMPG grant funds for a two year period at approximately \$35,000 per year. The services will be for 211 to manage and facilitate the Vulnerable Population registry.

The Department of Human Services responded that their intention was to continue the following programs in the 2011-13 biennium.

**DHS Contracts with First Link**

Contracts	Services	Contract Term	Amount
Southeast Human Service Center	24 hour emergency telephone answering and intervention services for Region 5	July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2011	35,748
	Referral Services for individuals calling about alternatives to abortion	July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2011	8,550
Economic Assistance Policy			

Referral Services for those  
with Mental health or  
addiction needs

Mental Health / Substance Abuse

April 1, 2010 - June 30, 2011

7,200

Total all DHS contracts

51,498

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,  
Sara

**Sara E. Chamberlin**  
*North Dakota Legislative Council- Fiscal Analyst*  
701.328.3729

---

**From:** Cindy Miller [mailto:cindym@myfirstlink.org]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 31, 2011 2:43 PM  
**To:** Chamberlin, Sara E.  
**Subject:** RE: SB2152 - FirstLink 211 Program Funding Bill Draft

I wrote to you before but did not get a reply...is the \$70,000 for doing intake forms for the NDDes? Also we will not still be receiving the \$51,498 from the state agencies...that funding is done June 30, 2011. It will not continue in to July 1, 2011-June 30, 2013.

Am understanding this correctly?  
Thanks Sara!

Cindy Miller  
Executive Director



cindym@myfirstlink.org  
701-293-6462

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**From:** Cindy Miller  
**Sent:** Monday, January 24, 2011 6:03 PM  
**To:** 'Chamberlin, Sara E.'  
**Subject:** RE: SB2152 - FirstLink 211 Program Funding Bill Draft

Thanks Sara. Is the \$70,000 for the contract to do disability intake forms for disasters?

Cindy Miller  
Executive Director





dym@myfirstlink.org

701-293-6462

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**From:** Chamberlin, Sara E. [mailto:schamberlin@nd.gov]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 20, 2011 9:16 AM  
**To:** Cindy Miller  
**Subject:** SB2152 - FirstLink 211 Program Funding Bill Draft

Good Morning Cindy,

Senator Lee said you had a question regarding the \$640,000 appropriation provided in Senate Bill No. 2152.

The appropriation is less than the amount requested (\$775,910) because of the amount of funding that state agencies anticipate providing to FirstLink for contracted services in the 2011-13 biennium (\$136,498). The following tables explain the appropriation amount.

FirstLink Requested Funding	2011-13 Biennium
Personnel	\$344,400
Operating	131,500
Marketing	300,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$775,910</b>

Funding from State Agencies	State Funding
Adjutant General	\$70,000 <sup>1</sup>
Department of Health	0
Department of Human Services	51,498
Insurance Department	15,000 <sup>2</sup>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$136,498</b>

I'd be happy to go over this, please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,  
Sara

**Sara E. Chamberlin**  
North Dakota Legislative Council- Fiscal Analyst  
701.328.3729