



County of Los Angeles
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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WILLIAM T FUJIOKA
Chief Executive Officer

November 28, 2007

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka
Chief Executive Officer

Board of Supervisors
GLORIA MOLINA
First District

YVONNE B. BURKE
Second District

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
Third District

DON KNABE
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Fifth District

**IMPROVED METHODOLOGY TO MONITOR THE QUALITY OF SERVICE
PROVIDED TO 211 CALLERS**

On July 24, 2007, on motion by Supervisor Gloria Molina, the Board instructed the Chief Executive Office (CEO), in consultation with Board offices, to work with 211 LA County to develop an improved methodology for monitoring the quality of service provided to 211 callers and to assess both the types of phone calls and what type of assistance is being provided, including a statistically significant survey of callers. As part of the assessment, a method to collect follow-up data on any complaint calls that relate to a lack of follow-up from County Departments or service agencies should be included and report back to the Board in 60 days on the methodologies. The CEO requested an extension to November 29, 2007, to adequately research this issue and respond to the directive.

Current Service Levels to Address Quality Assurance

211 LA County is meeting the obligations as set forth in their contract. The agency maintains a Quality Control Plan, which addresses the activities to be monitored, the methods of monitoring used, and the frequency of monitoring. Currently, 211 follows up with 10 percent of Code Enforcement calls for Unincorporated Area Services. In addition, 211 follows up on 1,500 of the 355,000 annual calls unrelated to Code Enforcement. One Quality Assurance staff position is paid from this contract to provide quality oversight for approximately 30,000 calls per month. 211 LA County's system tracks the type of call, be it assisted, unassisted, or crisis, and the resulting referral. The agency also provides service-related follow-up on both a random and stratified sample of callers that agree to a follow-up contact during the initial call for service. The

stratified call sampling plan requires follow-up on a subset of calls referred to the County, such as crisis calls or any calls where there is an allegation of child or adult endangerment. Focus for follow-up has placed more emphasis on customer satisfaction with 211 LA County services rather than satisfaction with the receipt of services they were referred to.

In order to improve the quality of service beyond current levels and enable the collection of follow-up data on complaint calls relating to County Departments or contracted service agencies, staff has met several times with 211 LA County and also brought this quality discussion forward to the Interagency Operations Group (IOG). The IOG is composed of operational managers from the Health and Human Services Departments, as well as Probation and Sheriff's Department, and is a critical component for facilitating solutions to remove operational barriers within the key departments serviced by 211. Staff also spent a day listening to roughly 83 calls on November 2, 2007, to assess the calls received and handled by the 211 Community Resource Advisors (CRAs).

Recommendations for Enhanced Quality Monitoring

As a result of these actions, areas for improvement were identified. However, some suggestions would be considered material changes to the 211 contract requiring a contract amendment, as well as additional monies to implement. The recommendations include the following:

- Having County staff listen to the handling of 211 calls once per month to identify any deficiencies and develop corrective actions;
- Providing training sessions and/or program fact sheets to 211 staff so they have a solid understanding of County services, systems, and resources;
- Systematically updating departmental information on program services and contractors through the IOG;
- Adding additional quality assurance positions; and
- Modifying the current follow-up survey system to capture customer satisfaction with County Departments and/or service providers.

In reviewing the handling of 211 calls, County staff identified the need to take a more proactive role to ensure that 211 CRAs are made aware/reminded of the various services and/or resources available through the County. There were observed calls where the referral, while not inappropriate, perhaps could have included a referral to a

County program, e.g., Department of Consumer Affairs' Self-Help Legal Access Center, Department of Mental Health's (DMH) ACCESS Services. As a result of this last review, staff from DMH ACCESS Services will be participating in the next scheduled review of 211 calls in December 2007.

On the whole, the CRAs responded promptly and professionally to the incoming calls addressing callers in their language of choice. This professionalism was maintained even during one call where the caller was rude and demeaning to the CRA. When an issue affecting one line was identified, 211 LA County promptly investigated and took action to correct the problem with the CRA. One technological issue that 211 is struggling with is the antiquated system used to access the resource database, which is cumbersome and slow in searching for referral services. Universally, the CRAs had to explain to the caller the system was searching for the requested services and to be patient while they accessed the services. 211 LA County is working to address this issue, currently they are in the process of developing a proprietary software utilizing non-County funds to improve the functionality and speed of the resource database, which would incorporate more comprehensive system-generated data reports for the County. This software is expected to be completed within 12 months.

211 LA County has identified the need for training, provided by County Departments on their programs and services, as an area where improvements could be made. The current contract requires very limited training from County Departments. 211 LA County has requested additional training/program fact sheets from the County to ensure that CRAs are able to consistently make informed referrals. To this end, the County needs to provide balance, as the goal is not to make the CRAs case managers; attendance at training can never hinder 211 LA County's ability to meet the contract standard of answering 80 percent of the 211 calls within the first minute. The County will continue to work closely with 211 LA County to identify training needs. Training seminars will not exceed one hour and when possible, a fact sheet/contact sheet may be utilized as an alternative. The review of calls by County staff will greatly assist in this endeavor.

Difficulty in obtaining up-to-date information from County entities for the resource database was also identified as an area in need of improvement. Contractually, 211 LA County must annually update the County's resource database or document three attempts to obtain a response. If a contacted entity does not respond, the resource information given to 211 callers may not be accurate. In order to facilitate the collection of data, the IOG will work with their member departments to provide updated information to the resource database on program services and contractors. This will assist the CRAs in providing accurate information to 211 callers.

Currently, there are no contractual requirements for 211 LA County to follow-up and collect data on referrals made to County Departments or service agencies, so changes in this area will require a contract amendment and additional funding. 211 LA County reviewed several different "off-the-shelf" software systems used to collect customer satisfaction data. The system 211 LA County has proposed would provide an automated, interactive customer satisfaction survey collection method. The system would call back 211 callers, who have agreed to participate, after a specified period of time following the initial call, and launch an automated survey. Callers would also be able to access the survey system through the regular 211 line, if they wish to report deficiencies or satisfaction with services. The system can be set for "trigger" criteria, which will escalate a caller's response up the chain of command at 211 for an appropriate action. The system would be able to provide daily statistics, including overall satisfaction and service response rates, as well as comparative reports for analysis, e.g., ability to see all surveys for customers not satisfied with the timeliness of services. This system would allow for increased follow-up, as well as the collection of data on customer satisfaction with County Departments and service providers. The cost for this system is estimated at \$135,000 for the first year.

As mentioned earlier, 211 LA County has one staff position assigned to provide quality assurance for over 30,000 calls per month. In contrast, the First 5 LA program has four quality assurance positions for approximately 3,000 calls per month. Information was requested from two other agencies within California that provide 211 Information and Referral (I&R) services to compare quality assurance staffing ratios. San Diego County is the second largest 211 service provider in California, and receives approximately 12,000 calls per month. They have one supervisor that spends half the time doing scheduling and half the time providing quality assurance. San Diego stated they are currently understaffed due to funding shortfalls and quality assurance is one of the priority areas identified as needing additional support. The other I&R service in Sacramento receives less than 4,000 calls per month. Similarly, they also have one supervisor allocated to spend half their time delivering quality assurance services. If Los Angeles County were to incorporate the same quality assurance staffing ratios as San Diego and Sacramento, that would result in approximately 1.25 and 3.75 positions, respectively, to ensure quality service. As 211 LA County will be launching a marketing strategy to increase call volume, quality of service is very important to sustain growth. Therefore, we would recommend increasing the number of quality assurance positions from one to three, which would add an additional \$139,000 to the contract agreement. 211 LA County has also identified a need for a Quality Assurance Trainer Manager position, which would add an additional \$76,000 for a total of \$215,000 per year.

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At this time, funding has not been budgeted for the additional quality assurance positions at 211, or for the automated customer satisfaction software. A Board letter will be submitted requesting these additional services once funding has been identified. In the meantime, the CEO will continue to implement the no-cost enhancements of listening to 211 calls on a monthly basis to identify areas for service improvement, as well as working with the IOG and County Departments to make sure that 211 has the most current information on County services to make effective and informed referrals.

If you have any questions, please contact Lari Sheehan at (213) 893-2477 or via e-mail at lsheehan@ceo.lacounty.gov; or your staff may contact Karen Herberts at (213) 974-1329 or via e-mail at kherberts@ceo.lacounty.gov.

WTF:LS:KH
LB:KH:hn

Attachment

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
Chief Information Officer
Director of Children and Family Services
Director of Community and Senior Services
Director and Chief Medical Officer of Health Services
Director of Mental Health
Director of Public Health
Director of Public Social Services
Executive Director of 211 LA County

C O R R E C T E D C O M M U N I C A T I O N



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Sachi A. Hamai, Executive Officer-
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

At its meeting held July 24, 2007, the Board took the following action:

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The following item was called up for consideration:

The Chief Executive Officer's attached recommendation to authorize the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), to prepare and execute amendments to the Information and Referral Federation of the County of Los Angeles, Incorporated dba 211 LA County's contract agreement for Cost of Living Adjustments, effective July 2007, and each following Fiscal Year upon approval of the 2-1-1 Oversight Group; also authorize the CEO to prepare and execute amendment to increase the maximum contract amount not to exceed \$250,000 for 211 LA County to conduct the second phase of the public information campaign; also consideration of Supervisor Yaroslavsky's recommendation that the Cost of Living Adjustments will be retroactive to Monday, July 16, 2007 when the agreements are adopted by the Board.

Supervisor Molina made the following statement:

"The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is recommending a cost of living adjustment (COLA) of 3 percent for 211 LA County, the County's contractor for providing toll-free/24-hour Information and Referral (I&R) services to constituents. The CEO is also recommending a contract amendment allocating \$250,000 from funds in Provisional Financing Uses, which this Board set aside for 2-1-1 enhancements, to fund a marketing/ public education campaign to expand public awareness of 2-1-1. While I recognize the critically valuable role which 211 LA County plays in helping to ensure that County residents enjoy easy, customer-friendly access to timely and accurate information—as well as referrals to important services provided by the County and other agencies—I remain concerned that we lack sufficient data to adequately assess our constituents' level of satisfaction with 2-1-1's I&R Services.

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“Before we spend \$250,000 on a wide range media campaign, including electronic media, I believe a more targeted approach to unincorporated areas in Los Angeles County might be more beneficial. The financial resources identified by the CEO may be better utilized to complete a targeted mailing to all residents in the unincorporated areas, as an example.”

Therefore, Supervisor Molina made a motion to:

1. Approve the recommended 3% contract Cost of Living Allowance but require that the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), in consultation with Board offices, work with 211 LA County to develop an improved methodology for monitoring the quality of service provided to 2-1-1 callers and to assess both the types of phone calls and what type of assistance is being provided, including a statistically significant survey of callers. As part of the assessment, a method to collect follow-up data on any complaint calls that relate to a lack of follow up from County Departments or service agencies should be included and report back to the Board in 60 days on the methodologies; and
2. Not approve the \$250,000 expenditure for marketing at this time but, instead, direct the CEO to review and consider lower or no-cost options for marketing approaches, with the CEO to return on September 4, 2007 with a recommendation to the Board on the best marketing and expenditure approach for 2-1-1 outreach efforts.

Supervisor Yaroslavsky made a suggestion that Supervisor Molina's motion be amended to delete the paragraph:

“Before we spend \$250,000 on a wide range media campaign, including electronic media, I believe a more targeted approach to unincorporated areas in Los Angeles County might be more beneficial. The financial resources identified by the CEO may be better utilized to complete a targeted mailing to all residents in the unincorporated areas, as an example.”

Supervisor Molina accepted Supervisor Yaroslavsky's suggestion.

Bryce Yokomizo, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, and Maribel Marin, Executive Director of 211 LA County, responded to questions posed by the Board.

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Supervisor Burke made a suggestion that Supervisor Molina's motion be further amended to request the Executive Director of 211 LA County to submit to the Board the marketing plan presented by the consultant to conduct the second phase of the public information campaign and to report back ~~to the Board on the methodologies~~ at the August 7, 2007 Board meeting. Supervisor Molina accepted Supervisor Burke's recommendation.

Therefore, Supervisor Molina's motion, as amended, seconded by Supervisor Knabe, was unanimously carried (Supervisor Antonovich being absent), with the understanding that the Cost of Living Adjustments will be retroactive to Monday, July 16, 2007.

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Attachment

Copies distributed:

Each Supervisor
Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Executive Director, 211 LA County