

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** The author intends this bill to strengthen the 2-1-1 system to improve overall disaster response. According to the author:

2-1-1 is a reliable alternative to 911 for Californians facing a crisis, a disaster, or needing access to basic needs. For families across California, 2-1-1 is a lifeline, and with the increase in large-scale natural disasters and emergency events, the need for a reliable 2-1-1 continues to grow. AB 1832 would ensure 2-1-1 has the support and visibility it needs to strengthen this statewide network and enable more people to get help quickly, especially after emergencies. In doing so, 2-1-1 service providers can relieve pressure on 911 and emergency response teams, creating a more coordinated and efficient disaster response system.

- 2) **The 4-1-1 on 2-1-1.** 2-1-1 is a phone number that connects the caller with non-emergency community information and referral services. In 2000, the Federal Communications Commission reserved the number and encouraged states to offer 2-1-1 dialing.

In California, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) approves requests to provide 2-1-1 services. As described by the CPUC, 2-1-1 services:

are operated by county-based entities that coordinate with local human services agencies and by providers who connect callers to local community services. These entities and providers are members of the California Association of Information and Referral Services (CAIRS) and partners of 2-1-1 California, which works with local, state, and federal government agencies on social services and coordinates with regional 2-1-1 service providers during emergencies and disasters. Each individual service provider establishes and maintains a database of community service programs and agencies for the county or counties it serves and updates the database at least once annually.

To provide 2-1-1 service, providers and entities first apply to the Commission for authority to provide these services. The Commission reviews the application for compliance with Commission requirements, a process that takes around six to twelve months. If the Commission approves the application, the provider must roll out service within one year.

When a caller dials 2-1-1, a local exchange carrier (LEC) routes the call to the authorized 2-1-1 provider in the caller's county. The provider receives the call and connects the caller to the appropriate programs and agencies drawn from the provider's database.

According to the CPUC, today, 2-1-1 services are active in 53 counties and available to 99.3% of California's population.

The bill is supported by many organizations that provide community services, such as various chapters of the United Way, as well as 2-1-1 California, a statewide nonprofit representing local 2-1-1 providers in California, which urges support for AB 1832, as well as a related \$20 million budget request from the General Fund, “to strengthen critical 2-1-1 services and ensure continued access to essential disaster aid and recovery resources and social services for all Californians.”

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