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**Missouri Foundation for Health and United Way  
Bring 2-1-1 Phone Service to Missouri  
\$8.5 Million Funds Program Start Up and Operation Costs**

St. Louis, MO (February 22, 2007) — The Missouri Foundation for Health (MFH) and United Way of Greater St. Louis are committing a total of \$8.5 million to bring the 2-1-1 helpline service to all Missourians. Beginning in Summer 2007, the service will roll out in three phases, and connect people to needed health and human services and to volunteer opportunities in their communities.

MFH has committed \$4.75 million to the project, \$1 million for start-up costs and \$3.75 million over the next five years to support annual operation costs. United Way of Greater St. Louis is providing \$3.75 million over the next five years to support the remaining annual operation costs.

The announcement makes Missouri the 20th U.S. state to have statewide coverage through a 2-1-1 service. A separate 2-1-1 service has been in operation in 16 Missouri counties of the Kansas City metropolitan area for almost a year. Nationally, United Way of America has played a lead role in the implementation of 2-1-1 services across the United States, with local United Way chapters working with individual partners in their states to implement statewide systems.

With 24-hour, seven-day-a-week availability, 2-1-1 provides callers with information about and referrals to health and human services for everyday needs and in time of crisis. For example, 2-1-1 can offer access to the following types of service organizations:

- *Basic human needs:* food banks, shelters, rent assistance, utility assistance.
- *Physical and mental health resources:* Medicaid and Medicare, maternal health, Children's Health Insurance Program, medical information phone lines, crisis intervention services, support groups, counseling, drug and alcohol intervention and rehabilitation.
- *Employment support:* financial assistance, job training, transportation assistance, educational programs.
- *Support for older adults and people with disabilities:* adult day care, Meals on Wheels, respite care, home health care, independent living programs.
- *Support for children, youth, and families:* childcare, after school programs, Head Start, family resource centers, summer camps and recreation programs, mentoring, tutoring, protective services.

"MFH's support of this essential community service goes hand-in-hand with our mission – to empower Missourians so they can achieve equal access to quality health services. Now, with one call our state's residents will be able to access important community resources," says Dr. James R. Kimmey, MFH's president and chief executive officer. "In tandem with the existing service in the Kansas City area service, we can now ensure that all of Missouri's 5.8 million residents can connect to a 2-1-1 service."

The United Way of Greater St. Louis, which is handling all 2-1-1 administration and operating responsibilities, has filed an application with the Public Service Commission (PSC) of Missouri to authorize the service. Once approved, the PSC will instruct Missouri's local telephone service providers to cooperate with the 2-1-1 plan, set rates, and switch calls to the 2-1-1 Call Center. Missouri has 38 different telephone companies currently operating.

According to Gary Dollar, president and chief operating officer of the United Way of Greater St. Louis, three implementation phases are planned: Phase 1 is targeted to begin in Summer 2007 with the AT&T service areas, which serve 80 percent of the state population, and includes the St. Louis metropolitan area, Cape Girardeau, Springfield, Poplar Bluff, Hannibal, Joplin and Kirksville. Phase 2, anticipated to start in Fall 2007, adds CenturyTel customers and the Columbia, Jefferson City, and Willow Springs areas. Phase 3, due to begin in 2008, adds all remaining telephone companies and state residents.

The 2-1-1 Call Center will be located at the United Way of Greater St. Louis, with data hubs in Cape Girardeau, Columbia, Springfield, and St. Louis, MO. The Call Center is a statewide expansion of the information and referral service United Way already provides for the St. Louis metropolitan area. The data hubs will focus on updating records about the health, health-related and social services to ensure that callers are always receiving current service information.

"We anticipate having a call volume of about 180,000 requests each year, once the system is mature," says Dollar. "The United Way of Greater St. Louis is about helping people and building a better community for all. 2-1-1 has a proven track record in providing high quality, comprehensive information and referral' and we're excited to implement it throughout Missouri with the funding MFH has generously provided. With community partnerships involving local United Ways, we now have the opportunity to expand upon our already extensive database of health and human service agencies and programs in the St. Louis region to include those organizations throughout the state. We look forward to making 2-1-1 access a successful reality for all Missourians."

Other Missouri United Ways joining 2-1-1 currently include: United Way of Central Missouri, United Way of the Ozarks, United Way of Southeast Missouri, United Way of Adair County, United Way of the Mark Twain Area, Callaway County United Way, Carthage Area United Way, United Way of Southwest Missouri, and United Way of St. Francois County.

#### About United Way of Greater St. Louis

The United Way funds 200 health and human service agencies located throughout a 16-county area in Missouri and Illinois. More than one million people in our bi-state community receive services that strengthen families, help the elderly, keep children healthy and safe, and build stronger neighborhoods. For more information, contact 314-421-0700 or visit [www.stl.unitedway.org](http://www.stl.unitedway.org).

#### About Missouri Foundation for Health

Established in 2000, the Missouri Foundation for Health is the largest non-governmental funder of community health activities in the state. MFH is in its sixth year of grantmaking, having issued more than \$200 million in grants and awards to date. It is dedicated to serving the uninsured and underserved in 84 Missouri counties and the City of St. Louis. For more information about MFH, visit [www.mffh.org](http://www.mffh.org)