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NJ2-1-1 Statewide Information and Referral Service Hires New Director **Barbara Gallagher Brings Premiere Call Center Experience to the Job**

Paramus, NJ November 13, 2007 – 2-1-1, a statewide network that connects NJ citizens with government, social service and community resources, is being taken to the next level with the hiring of Barbara Gallagher as Director, 2-1-1 Client Services. Ms. Gallagher brings years of corporate experience to the position including her most recent responsibilities as senior vice president of a global client service call center for Bank of America. Certified by Call Center University in 1999, her expertise extends to the technical telephony issues that vast call centers face, the “how-to” of call center staff recruiting, hiring and training, as well as the management reporting that is so critical to accurate monitoring of call center capabilities.

“We couldn’t be more pleased that Barbara has joined the 2-1-1 team,” explains Tom Toronto, Chairman of the NJ211 Partnership and President of Bergen County’s United Way. “We’ve created an impressively comprehensive database of the state’s resources. Our goal is to make these resources easily accessible to New Jersey’s citizens through accurate referrals. With Barbara’s background in sales management and training, her understanding of call center operations and her natural leadership capabilities, our call center staff, under her supervision, will provide world-class service to NJ residents who are seeking non-emergency information and referral assistance.”

2-1-1 was launched statewide in the beginning of 2005. A companion Web site – www.nj211.org – was created in 2006. “The services that are so necessary are well established,” states Ms. Gallagher. “With a functional and comprehensive database and call centers that are staffed with well-trained individuals, we have what it takes to provide the link between a person’s needs and the resources that will do the job.” From the beginning, 2-1-1 was designed to answer questions and address situations that were anything other than life threatening. “If you have a life threatening emergency, you should call 9-1-1,” explains the director. “For everything else, you should contact 2-1-1 either by picking up the phone (land line or mobile) and dialing 2-1-1 or by going to www.nj211.org.”

Citizens are urged to use 2-1-1 when they need answers. The call centers, staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, are equipped to address the needs of families in crisis, by identifying such necessities as local shelters or food pantries, and providing information on how to apply for food stamps or temporary rental assistance. Everyday needs are also handled and operators frequently respond to inquiries regarding the availability of such things as local preschool programs or adult care centers. Additionally, the system provides critical information during times of emergencies, as it did in May 2007, when wildfires raged through the New Jersey Pinelands and community residents called 2-1-1 to get information on the status and exact locations of the fires. Volunteer requests successfully funnel through the system as well, when callers who wish to donate their time, efforts or resources are connected to local agencies that will benefit from their generosity.

About 2-1-1

2-1-1 is a statewide information and referral network designed to connect people in need with government, social services and community resources that provide assistance. This free, confidential service is supported by United Way in partnership with the State of New Jersey – Department of Human Services and the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness.