

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Wayne/Holmes Emergency Coalition  
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**WHAT IS 2-1-1?**

2-1-1 is an easy to remember phone number that connects individuals with resources in their community. With approximately 1.5 million nonprofit organizations in the United States plus scores of government agencies, finding help can be confusing and intimidating. Every hour of every day, people need essential human services. They may be looking for training, rent or utility payment assistance, food pantries, shelter, help for an aging parent, addiction-prevention programs for their teen-aged children, affordable housing options, support groups, or ways of becoming a part of a community by volunteering. 2-1-1 allows people to give help and to get help.

InfoLink, the information and referral service of The United Way of Wayne and Holmes Counties, is in the process of becoming a 211 information and referral center. 211 Infolink is going live in Wayne and Holmes Counties in September 2010. By becoming a 2-1-1 call center, InfoLink will be able to provide residents of Wayne and Holmes Counties with access to information and referral services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The current InfoLink information and referral line is available only during business hours Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Employees in health and human services know that need does not begin and end with a business day. By partnering with an established 2-1-1 call center, which currently includes Medina, Geauga, and Cuyahoga counties, 211 InfoLink's database of health and human service resources will be greatly expanded. This increases the listing of potential resources available to callers in need. Another major advantage of the 2-1-1 information and referral service is that the web-based resource database utilized by the 2-1-1 call specialists is also available for on-line search by our clients as well as our agency partners. The database can be accessed by logging onto the website at [www.211wayneholmes.org](http://www.211wayneholmes.org).

The human services system in many of our cities and states is not only inefficient and costly, but is confusing and time consuming for consumers seeking to give or get help. It doesn't need to be this way. A national 2-1-1 system has the potential to provide cost savings for tax payers, employers, and government; and 2-1-1 in any

community saves time and enhances the human services experience for those needing help. Supporting 2-1-1 benefits our community stakeholders who are aware of their local and state needs and resources. 211 InfoLink in Wayne and Holmes counties will remain a part of the community fabric and service our local communities. However, the existing information and referral service will be expanded to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including holidays. Nation-wide businesses, nonprofit organizations, and government officials have supported 2-1-1 as a way to improve the lives of the residents in their communities. As of January 2010, 2-1-1 served over 240 million Americans--more than 80 percent of the entire population.

Any questions regarding InfoLink's transition to 211 may be directed to The United Way of Wayne and Holmes Counties at (330) 264-5576.

If you would like to submit questions to the Wayne/Holmes Emergency Coalition or make topic suggestions, please go to our website at [www.whec.org](http://www.whec.org).