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Portage Metropolitan Housing Authority

PUCO

April 12, 2000

Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
 ATTN: Docketing Department and Dan Fullin, Attorney Examiner
 180 East Broad Street
 Columbus, Ohio 43215-3793

Re: Case No. 93-1799-TP-COI

Dear Mr. Fullin:

This letter serves to express the support of the PMHA for the PUCO's preliminary findings supporting a two-year pilot using "211" as the three-digit access number for non-emergency community service referrals throughout Ohio. Our experience as providers of housing for low-income households has made us keenly aware of the fact that many low-income residents in need of community services often do not know where to turn. A simple, reliable universally recognizable access number could make all the difference for a person in need.

The information and referral service in Portage County, United Way's First Call For Help provides valuable, up-to-date, comprehensive information on vital community services available to residents. In Portage County, United Way's First Call For Help responds to over 15,000 requests for assistance from residents each year. First Call for Help has a unique ability to provide comprehensive referral services, as the staff works collaboratively with agencies and organizations in our community, and is actively involved in a wide variety of coalitions, collaboratives and task forces that address community issues and services.

However, many individuals and families in need still do not know how to access the vital community service information and referral available. This is the case in most counties in the state. Designating 211 as a state-wide access number for community service referrals would ensure that residents in our communities get the help they need as soon as possible. We feel that the designation of "211" as the three-digit access number for non-emergency community service referrals will greatly benefit both Portage County residents, and residents throughout the State of Ohio.

Sincerely,

Christie Anderson

Christie M. Anderson,
 Executive Director

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 Technician Sut Date Processed 4-18-00

cc: Erin Dunbar, First Call For Help

2832 State Route 59, Ravenna, Ohio 44266 Phone: 330-297-1489 FAX: 330-297-6295

• Equal Housing Opportunity •