



MENTAL HEALTH & RECOVERY BOARD
OF PORTAGE COUNTY

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PUCO

April 11, 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:

I am writing in support of 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.

Every day, a number of Portage County residents are in need of mental health, substance abuse, or other community service needs and often do not know where to turn. A simple, reliable universally recognizable access number could make all the difference for a person in need of mental health and recovery services.

The information and referral service in Portage County, United Way's FIRST CALL FOR HELP provides valuable, up-to-date, comprehensive information on mental health and recovery services available in Portage County. United Way's FIRST CALL FOR HELP works collaboratively with the Mental Health & Recovery Network of Portage County, and is actively involved in a wide variety of coalitions, collaboratives and task forces that address a number of community issues and needs. However, many individuals and families in need still do not know how to access the vital community service information and referral available. 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.

Sincerely,

Suzanne H. Hetrick, Ph.D.
Executive Director

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1640 Franklin Ave., Suite 100, P.O. Box 743, Kent, OH 44240-0014
PHONE: (330) 673-1756 FAX: (330) 673-1330 e-mail: mhrbpc@gwis.com
VOICE/TTY: (330) 678-4357 or (330) 296-2255

On the Web at www.mental-health-recovery.org
The Board offers equal employment and service opportunities.

