



February 7, 2024

**House Bill 353
Maryland Department of Health- 2-1-1 Maryland- Oversight
House Health & Government Operations Committee**

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Esteemed Committee Members,

My name is Quinton Askew, serving as the President/CEO of the Maryland Information Network, home to 211 Maryland. It's an honor to advocate for House Bill 353, which pertains to the oversight of the Maryland Department of Health and 2-1-1 Maryland. 211 Maryland stands as a pivotal resource, offering a straightforward and memorable way for Marylanders to access health and human services. Our extensive database connects individuals to local assistance around the clock, every day of the year, in over 150 languages. Through our network of call centers, we provide crucial support to residents, guiding them seamlessly to the right services with a "No Wrong Door Approach."

In Fiscal Year 23 alone, we facilitated over 1.37 million connections via phone, text, chat, and web. This achievement underscores the collaborative effort between our partners and the Call Center Network to broaden our impact, improve service quality, and coordinate care efficiently for those in need. The Maryland Information Network, the driving force behind 211 Maryland, has evolved significantly. It has become an essential tool for state agencies to enhance access to dependable services, aid emergency departments in care coordination, and disseminate critical emergency management information.

I am proud to endorse HB 353, a bill that accurately reflects the mission of the Maryland Information Network as the state's primary connector for health and human services. It also clarifies the roles and responsibilities between the board and the Department.

This past year, we've seen considerable growth in both the board and our organization, ensuring the 211 system can meet Marylanders' needs and secure the necessary funding to do so. HB 353 aims to solidify our partnership with the department, fostering more sustainable funding solutions and enhancing collaboration with other government entities.

We are grateful to the General Assembly for acknowledging the critical role of 2-1-1 Maryland and for the legislative efforts previously made to support our mission sustainably.

Therefore, we respectfully request your FAVORABLE consideration of House Bill 353.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Quinton Askew

Quinton Askew,

President/CEO Maryland Information Network, 211 Maryland