

## News Release

### United Way Waterloo Region Communities

For Immediate Release-February 11, 2020

#### **On 211 Day, Canadians are encouraged to Make the Right Call!**

Today is #211Day, a national initiative designed to raise awareness about a vital service that helps Canadians navigate the complex web of government and community social services in their community.

“Finding help during life’s challenges can be hard, especially if you are dealing with the loss of a job, housing issues, caring for an aging parent, or trying to make ends meet,” says Nancy Bird, Senior Director of Community Investment and Engagement at United Way Waterloo Region Communities. “That is the reason why so many United Way Centraides across the country, including United Way Waterloo Region Communities, have invested in 211, an information-navigation service that makes it easier to find the supports and services community members need. We are truly grateful to our donors for making this investment possible.”

Across Canada, 211 now reaches more than 26 million Canadians, providing confidential guidance for anyone experiencing life challenges. The service is free, confidential, and available 24/7 with live answer in over 150 languages, providing an important gateway to community, social, non-clinical health, and related government services. Here in Waterloo Region, support from 211 can also be accessed online at [www.211Ontario.ca](http://www.211Ontario.ca).

This year, on #211Day, United Way Centraides, 211 ambassadors, and 211 service providers are working together to inform Canadians on how to ‘Make the Right Call’. The campaign aims to help Canadians access the appropriate services through 211, while reducing congestion caused by non-emergency calls to 911 dispatch lines. To help get that message across, The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, The Paramedic Association of Canada, and Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs have all lent their support to #211day this year.

"Our front-line officers respond to calls for service from the community every day. These calls aren't just related to crime. Officers often deal with people experiencing difficulties related to mental health, addiction, and homelessness. Police see, firsthand, how difficult it can be to navigate various systems to try to figure out which resources are available. We're pleased that 211 will help connect people in need with help and resources and will be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week," said Chief Constable Adam Palmer, President of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police.

“The Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs (CAFC) is pleased to help raise awareness about the 211 service in the eight provinces in which it exists. Having the right support, in the right place, and at the right time can help to prevent emergencies and reduces non-emergency calls to 911, thus ensuring community resources in a fire or emergency are appropriately utilized,” said Chief John McKearney, President of the CAFC.

“As paramedics we’re one of the only health care providers to care for a patient in their home situation. We see the evidence of the issues they might be dealing with beyond their immediate health emergency, but we’re not equipped to answer every need. 211 is a great resource to be able to share with our patients and their families, so they can get help resolving some of their

other challenges,” said Tim Stairs, Treasurer of the Paramedic Association of Canada.

Canadians should call 9-1-1 for a life-threatening emergency, when a property is in danger or a crime is in progress that requires the police, fire or paramedics.

211 information experts help callers make sense of social, health and government services information that is often buried on websites, social media channels, e-newsletters, and spread throughout the network of partners and community leaders.

Later this winter, 211 will celebrate yet another expansion with province-wide call, text and web service rolling out across Prince Edward Island. This announcement follows the recent province-wide expansion in Alberta, made possible through funding from the Provincial Government.

More Canadians than ever can Make the Right Call and access information on government and community-based health and social services with 211.

### **Digital Assets:**

1. [CEO bio and photo, United Way backgrounder, logos, and 211 infographics](#); you can also find these digital assets at [www.uwaywrc.ca/communications](http://www.uwaywrc.ca/communications).
2. [Video PSAs about the 211 service](#)

- 30 -

### **About United Way Waterloo Region Communities**

United Way Waterloo Region Communities is dedicated to helping people live better lives in every one of the seven communities we serve. We are fundraisers who support a network of agencies whose programs and services are locally focused, informed, connected, and deeply invested in helping people reach their full potential.

For more information or for media interviews, please contact:

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