

211 Phone Service for Central and Northern New York **Officially Launches on 2-11!**

Syracuse NY – United Way of Central New York, United Way of Greater Oswego County, United Way of Northern New York and Contact Community Services are pleased to announce a new 211 informational phone service for five Upstate NY counties. Contact Community Services, Inc. will act as the designated 211CNY call center, which will serve St. Lawrence, Jefferson, Lewis, Oswego and Onondaga counties. Our launch is just in time for 211 Day, on February 11, which is 2-11!

The 211CNY center will provide 24-hour free and confidential information about health and human services resources available in a caller's community. Residents in the covered area can seek assistance or information on a wide range of issues, including basic needs, substance abuse, family services, mental health, legal aid, and holiday assistance.

"211 has been an important service in other regions across New York State as well as the rest of the country, so we are pleased that we will now be able to offer this service to Central and Northern New York" said Frank Lazarski, President of United Way of Central New York.

The Federal Communications Commission set aside the 211 dialing code for community information and referral services in July 2000. It has been implemented across the United States and Canada.

"People who don't know where to turn for assistance, or simply want information on a particular human service issue, can simply dial 211. We have provided information and referral on behalf of Onondaga County for many years, and we are excited to now be collaborating with United Way and our neighboring counties. Together we are creating and delivering an outstanding service," said Cheryl Giarrusso, Director of Crisis Intervention Services at Contact.

For people with internet access there is also a robust website of services for the five counties on the 211CNY website: 211cny.com.



Contact Community Services' Crisis Intervention Services Director Cheryl Giarrusso (*front*) talks with (*from left*) New York State Senator John DeFrancisco, Assemblyman Al Stirpe, Senator Dave Valesky, and Contact Executive Director Pat Leone, at the opening of the 211CNY call center at Contact.