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December 6, 2018

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: WC Docket No. 18-336 and CC Docket No. 92-105
regarding the National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act of 2018

Dear Madam:

United Way of Acadiana appreciates the opportunity to comment on the FCC's feasibility study regarding the designation of a three-digit number for the National Suicide Hotline and to assess the effectiveness of the current National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. We believe in the power of connection, especially for vulnerable people, and are committed as part of the United Way network in the U.S. to fight for the health, education and financial stability of every person in our community. To that end, United Way of Acadiana has supported information and referral services in our region since 1975 and was delighted when our local independent provider of this service received their 2-1-1 designation, the fourth agency in the nation to do so. Our investment as of 2018 in the amazing 2-1-1 network locally exceeds \$5.1 million.

We urge you to consider carefully the ramifications of adding another N-1-1 to the health and human service infrastructure. The time and investment required to bring such an operation to scale is worthy of further analysis. The 2-1-1 system has 20 years of building trust, infrastructure, data for wrap-around supports, and a model that is highly adaptive and respectful in its partnerships. This work has been fostered and supported by local United Ways like ours, either as service providers themselves or investors in regional and/or statewide networks. We at United Way of Acadiana have stood behind 2-1-1 and committed our assets and thought leadership to grow coverage and improve quality. Our local 2-1-1 service provider is on the front lines now addressing the very health issues that were part of the original mandate from the FCC. They seamlessly provide crisis services and counseling in partnership with an accredited crisis center in another part of Louisiana.

Strong consideration should be given to a blended model like the one in my community (and elsewhere) that builds on the existing network within 2-1-1 as the front door for crisis services. This opportunity to synergize will promote alignment, efficiency, better serve those in need and will scale much more quickly. Thus we believe that it is most prudent to consider investment in 2-1-1 as a system that is already working but as one that could be strengthened for a more unified access point for crisis and in the fight against suicide.

Thank you for your efforts to address an improved mental health and crisis response system. We understand the power of partnership, and offer our assistance in the fight against suicide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret H. Trahan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Margaret H. Trahan
President/CEO

Copy: Louisiana Congressional delegation

