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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 Secretary Dortch,

As a Board member of ***211 Palm Beach Treasure Coast,*** I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the current effort undertaken by the Federal Communications Commission to study the feasibility of designating a three-digit number to the National Suicide Hotline and to assess the effectiveness of the current National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. In Palm Beach County and along the Treasure Coast, 211 is fighting for the health, education, and financial stability of our community members. 211's life-saving mission provides crisis intervention, including emergency counseling and suicide prevention, substance abuse assistance, and shelter resources from for victims fleeing violent domestic situations.

Our organization has a 47 year history of responding to the needs of the underserved and today we partner with County Commissioners, Children's Services Councils, and United Ways in all five counties we serve to drive systemic changes to solve our community's toughest problems. Our 211, like many across the nation, provide blended services, responding to requests for information and referral ***as well as offering crisis counseling and suicide prevention.***

We encourage the FCC to consider our 211 work here in Palm Beach and on the Treasure Coast as a vital partner in increasing access to suicide prevention and intervention services. Since the FCC designation of 211 in 2000, Community Partners from Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River, and Okeechobee Counties have invested millions of dollars to ensure the success of 211 Palm Beach/Treasure Coast, as we respond to close to 100,000 requests for help each year- ***thousands of which are from individuals struggling with suicidal thoughts.***

Another three-digit code may erode the simplicity of a single point of access for community help. Despite concerted efforts to educate and market the distinctions, a person in crisis will likely always reach for the most familiar or most accessible number. Our 211 receives calls that are better suited for 911, and our 911 partners often receive calls that we can best answer. We recommend

that resources should be invested to improve a unified single point of access with a blended partnership of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and nationwide 211 services. We believe in the power of partnership to address gaps, not duplicate services, and will be a valuable partner in the fight against suicide.

You can learn more about our work at www.211palmbeach.org and www.211treasurecoast.org, You can reach my office for additional questions or discussion at (561) 278-0456. Thank you for your time in addressing this important issue and for your consideration.

Sincerely,

George T. Elmore
President