

For Immediate Release

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Calls to 2-1-1 up by 167% as Pikes Peak region grapples with COVID-19

Colorado Springs, CO, Friday, March 27, 2020 — Calls to 2-1-1 have increased dramatically in recent weeks as Coloradans grapple with COVID-19 spreading across the state and the implications of the “stay at home” order from Governor Jared Polis.

PPUW has run the free information and referral hotline for years, serving residents of 12 counties, including El Paso and Teller counties, during moments of crisis. But this month, as members of our community encounter unprecedented challenges, the call-takers’ work has become even more critical.

Many callers’ lives have been turned upside down by the pandemic.

Some have lost their jobs because of the virus and are wondering what resources are available to them to help them find food or pay rent. Others are seeking clarification on health officials’ latest recommendations so they can make informed decisions for their families. 2-1-1 is also working with COSILoveYou to ensure that seniors or those who cannot leave their homes are able to access food and prescriptions.

Because El Paso County Public Health was experiencing a surge in calls related to COVID-19, the Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management activated 2-1-1 on March 12 to support the Emergency Operations Center by taking calls.

During the week of March 1-7, 635 calls came in to 2-1-1. But during the week of March 16-22, call-takers received 1,694 calls — an increase of 167%. Of those, 311 were calls to the county’s information line.

As of Tuesday, March 24, PPUW has taken 537 of those COVID-19 calls on behalf of the county through our phone lines. This week, 2-1-1 also began assisting Teller County with its calls about COVID-19.

Full-time 2-1-1 call-takers have been joined by staff members from PPUW’s other departments, who have been trained to assist. Our work has been made possible by generous gifts this month from USAA and Ent Credit Union, on top of the support provided year-round by Ent Credit Union and GE Johnson to power the hotline.

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About Pikes Peak United Way Pikes Peak United Way works to advance the common good, creating opportunities for a better life for all by focusing on the three key quality of life building blocks - education, income and health. Pikes Peak United Way creates long-lasting community change by addressing the underlying causes that prevent progress in these areas. For more information about Pikes Peak United Way, please visit ppunitedway.org