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of Pennsylvania

October 13, 2020

## **LBFC Report on Health and Human Services Hotlines**

On October 7, 2020, the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee (LBFC), a Joint Committee of the Pennsylvania General Assembly, released a study entitled, “A Report on the Pennsylvania Health and Human Services Hotlines.” This report was the result of House Resolution 507 of 2019, which was adopted by a vote of 198-0 on November 19, 2019. The study determined that the cost for the hotlines, for which data was available, was more than \$75,369,544 in FY 2018-19. It is important to state that the report indicated a cost for 66 hotlines, however it also noted that cost information was not available/provided for 18 hotlines.

The LBFC reviewed hotlines operated or contracted by Commonwealth agencies and quasi-state agencies and PA-211 during FY 2016-17, FY2017-18 and FY2018-19. The objectives of the study were:

1. To identify health and human services hotlines operated or contracted for by the indicated Commonwealth agencies.
2. To identify the services provided, staffing, cost and appropriations, contract options, and hours of operation for each hotline.
3. To analyze the information maintained by each agency regarding the functioning of hotlines.
4. To identify private and charitable entities that support hotlines.

Those following were identified as participants per objective 1:

- Pennsylvania Department of Aging
  - PACE Cardholder Services Call Center
  - PACE Application Call Center
  - PACE Provider Services/Prospective Drug Utilization Review Call Center
  - PACE PA Clearing House Call Center
  - PDA Link to Aging and Disability Resources Center Call Center
  - APPRISE Helpline
  - Reporter Elder Abuse Hotline
- PA Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs
  - PA Get Help Now
  - PA Compulsive & Problem Gambling
- PA Dept. of Health
  - 1-877-PAHEALTH
  - Lead Information Line
  - Healthy Baby Line

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- Special Pharmaceutical Benefits Program Customer Service Line
- WIC WINS
- WIC Vendor Assistance Helpline
- PA Tobacco Quitline
- Vital Records Consumer Support Hotline
- Vital Events Registration Hotline
- Vital Records Legislative Hotline
- Prescription Drug Monitoring Program
- QA Complaint Hotline
- Brain Injury Helpline
- PA Cancer Registry
- PA Statewide Immunization Registry (PA-SIIS)
- HMO Consumer Complaints
- Home Health Complaints
- Managed Care Consumer Inquiries/Complaints
- Nurse Aide Registry Customer Service Line
- Special Kids Network Helpline
- Medical Marijuana Support Line
- PA State AIDS Factline
- The PA Dept. of Human Services
  - CHIP Helpline
  - OMAP Eligible Verification Services
  - OMAP Service Line
  - Office of Longterm Living Provider Helpline
  - OLTL Participant Helpline
  - OLTL Nursing Facility Durable Medical Equipment (DME)/Preventable Serious Adverse Events (PSAE) Hotline"
  - OLTL Community HealthChoices (CHC) Participation Hotline
  - Independent Enrollment Broker (CHC)
  - PA Independent Enrollment Broker (IEB)
  - Public Partnerships (PPL) Customer Service Line
  - Bureau of Human Services Licensing Complaint Hotline
  - Bureau of Human Services Licensing Operator Support Hotline
  - Adult Protective Services Hotline
  - Office of Income Maintenance Customer Service Center
  - OIM Helpline and Correspondence
  - LIHEAP Helpline
  - Office of Developmental Programs Customer Service Line
  - ODP Claims Resolution Helpline
  - Bureau of Supports for Autism and Special Populations Services Helpline
  - Child Welfare Information Solution (CWIS) Support Center
  - Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA) Helpline

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- ChildLine Hotline
- Child Abuse Certifications/Background Checks Line
- SWAN Helpline
- Safe Haven Helpline
- SWAN LSI Warmline
- SWAN Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange (PAE)
- KinConnector Helpline – 1-866-KIN-2111
- Child Care Works/PAKIDS Helpline
- CONNECT Helpline
- Welfare Fraud Tipline/Hotline (Office of Administration (OA))
- Pennsylvania Housing Finance Authority
  - PHFA Customer Solutions Center (CSC) Hotline
  - PAHousingSearch.com Call Center
- PA Public Utility Commission
  - PUC Consumer Hotline

The LBFC developed a 15-point hotline information request to gather data from the agencies, quasi-state agencies and PA 211 and presented the following:

- Basic Information.
- Optional Services.
- Subject Matter.
- Disposition of Calls.
- Call Volume.
- Average Wait Time.
- County of Origin.
- Annual Operation Cost.

In comparison to the other hotlines in the study, PA 211 was able to produce a significant amount of information to the LBFC. Some hotlines were unable to provide data regarding call volume, disposition of calls, average wait times and county of origin. In addition, PA 211 is subject to annual audits demonstrating accountability and integrity of the operations of the hotline. In contrast, 18 hotlines could not provide cost data. Considering the current fiscal climate, PA 211 serves as a model for fiscal responsibility.

Please note, the purpose of this brief is to provide an overview of the LBFC study of health and human services hotlines. The LBFC report does not make recommendations nor does it question any practices, expenditures or operations of any hotlines. For more information, or to review the report, please visit <http://lbfc.legis.state.pa.us/Reports.cfm?ReportID=324>.

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