

Executive Summary

Researchers with the Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources (RMC), a policy research and evaluation unit of the University of Texas at Austin's Lyndon Baines Johnson School of Public Affairs, prepared the December 1998 report, *The Value of a Comprehensive Texas Information and Referral Network* under contract with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission. The report estimated the benefits, costs and net value of a comprehensive I&R Network comprised of 25 Area Information Centers (AICs), a centralized automated information warehouse, a state website, and a 211 Single Number System (SNS) dedicated to health and human services information. Since the issuance of that report, I&R administrators and staff at the state and local levels have been steadily implementing the first three components of the system. In July 2000, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) officially designated 211 as the national health and human service number, largely clearing the way for Texas to roll out the 211 SNS component. In support of its appropriations request to do so, the Texas I&R Network approached the RMC to revise our earlier analysis based upon updated information related to the single number system (SNS).

This report summarizes the results of the revised benefits/costs analysis for the Texas I&R Network. As in the earlier report, we found that state appropriations for a comprehensive Texas Health and Human Services Information & Referral Network will create more benefits than cost and will return a net value to society. Despite an increase in total cost for the Network, we estimate that the unadjusted net benefit to society rose by nearly \$0.3 million to \$14.7 million and that the share of the total costs borne by the state government dropped more than \$1.0 million. State cost reductions are the result of increased local contributions to this collaborative public/private effort.

To arrive at these estimates, we reviewed previous and additional assumptions related to our valuation formulas. We decided that the basic conceptual cost/benefits model used to arrive at our original estimates retained validity. We incorporated the new information into our model to produce the revised estimates.