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**INTERFACE CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES CALLED UPON TO EXTEND 2-1-1 SERVICES TO HURRICANE FLORENCE VICTIMS THROUGH SUNDAY**

**CAMARILLO, CA, Sept. 21** – Camarillo — Interface was asked by United Way North Carolina in partnership with United Way Worldwide to provide support through Sunday to assist with more than 14,000 calls and text requests for help slamming the 2-1-1 North Carolina during and in the aftermath of Hurricane Florence. As of Thursday, 59 states of emergency had been declared by counties, with 22 in the Eastern region, 15 in the Central, and 22 in the Western region; 4,743 rescues had been completed; and more than 7,000 residents are currently in shelters.

The request followed a conference call scheduled by Governor Cooper of North Carolina this week recognizing the vital support of experienced 2-1-1s across the nation. Along with Interface's 2-1-1 Ventura County (2-1-1 VC) team, 2-1-1 teams from Connecticut, Florida, Los Angeles and others were also invited to be recognized by the governor and United Way North Carolina and United Way Worldwide for stepping in with offers of support prior to the onslaught of the hurricane.

During the call, Governor Cooper made it clear that water was still cresting endangering thousands of residents while the recovery phase was starting in other communities. His goal was to make sure the group knew how vital their short term and long-term role was to the state of North Carolina and the Office of Emergency Services.

Interface has worked closely with United Way Worldwide over the past 18 months to develop a coordinated response plan and core group of 2-1-1 responders who are equipped to take redirected calls from fearful residents and family members who become overwhelmed or disabled during disasters. These included fires in Northern California, the mass shooting in Las Vegas, hurricanes in Houston and Florida and now North Carolina. This is in addition to the intense response and ongoing long-term recovery work Interface is providing to individuals impacted by the historical Ventura-based Thomas Fire and Montecito Mudslides.

Interface's 2-1-1 team has been working around the clock with extra support this week from trained volunteers provided by Ventura County Credit Union. 2-1-1 partners in Alameda and Sacramento county were also quick to respond with additional support to ensure low wait times for worried callers. "A number of the North Carolina calls have been heart wrenching" according to 2-1-1 VC Director Kelly Brown. "We have been taking calls from residents literally in the midst of water rising in their home, desperate and unable to reach local authorities for immediate rescue situations. We have had many successful calls including one in which we were grateful to learn from United Way Worldwide that a family was safely rescued from water rising to alarming levels in their home because of quick thinking and guidance from Interface's 2-1-1 VC call specialist Mayra Ramirez-Chavez."

"Interface is honored to represent Ventura County in supporting other regions during their most difficult and challenging times. Unfortunately, one day we may be in another situation where we need to call on other experienced 2-1-1 teams to ensure the safety of our own residents back here at home. "

### **About Interface Children & Family Services**

Interface Children & Family Services is Ventura County's most comprehensive non-profit social service agency offering 24 distinct programs with 10 evidence-based practices. Founded in 1973, Interface works to prevent and heal the effects of child abuse, neglect and abandonment; domestic violence; human trafficking; family conflict and mental health issues; and administers justice involved intervention and prevention services. Interface has pioneered several programs including ranking among the first to open a domestic violence shelter in California and launching the state's first 2-1-1 call center. Currently, the agency serves approximately 35,000 local individuals annually and connects 150,000 people to a vast network of health and human services in 19 counties through operation of the 2-1-1 information and referral system helpline. This important work is sustained through donations and grants from individuals and organizations, as well as by the work of dedicated volunteers and staff. For more information please contact Interface Children & Family Services at 4001 Mission Oaks Blvd, Suite I, Camarillo, CA 93012 by telephone at 805.485.6114 or visit [www.icfs.org](http://www.icfs.org).



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