

## Media Release

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### **Safety Net Beginning to Fray Crisis Clinic Executive Director Tells House Subcommittee on Income Security and Family Support**

At the request of Representative Jim McDermott, chair of the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Income Security and Family Support, Kathleen Southwick, Executive Director, Crisis Clinic was invited to present on the topic “Safety Net’s Response to the Recession.” The panel presentation was Thursday, October 8<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM in Washington, D.C.

Southwick presented information on the status of callers to the King County 2-1-1 Community Information Line (2-1-1) who are seeking health and human services information and highlighted changes in the needs of callers over the past year because of the recession.

Southwick reported on the trends that are affecting King County residents calling 2-1-1 for help that include:

1. More people in need and calling for help
2. More requests for basic needs and financial services
3. Emerging needs related to the recession
4. Callers having multiple and more complex needs
5. Decreasing services

According to Southwick, “Our safety net is beginning to fray and many more people will not get the help they need. We believe that the situation will get worse before it gets better.”

She continued, “While the recession has increased the need for human services among those living below or just above the poverty level, it is also pushing formerly middle-income families to have a greater reliance on specific income and service supports. Many callers tell us, ‘I used to volunteer at my local food bank and now I’m the one standing in line for help.’”

“This increased need is occurring at a time when state and local governments do not have the revenue to even maintain previous levels of social services and supports. In Washington State, human services providers are beginning to experience the reduction in funding from state and county government, which will translate into less availability of services for their clients. We expect this lack of services situation to continue into 2012 and 2013 because the economic

rebound may not be sufficient enough to support local governments in reprioritizing human services,” she said.

Crisis Clinic has provided comprehensive information and referral information to residents of King County, WA since 1973. In 2008, 2-1-1 responded to 108,000 calls for help linking callers to a wide range of community services.

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Copies of Southwick’s testimony are available and she is available for interviews (contact Christina Merhar at 206-461-3210 x605 or [cmerhar@crisisclinic.org](mailto:cmerhar@crisisclinic.org))