



Cancer Support Foundation, Inc.  
8268 Academy Road  
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

Phone: 410.964.9563  
Email: [info@cancersupportfoundation.org](mailto:info@cancersupportfoundation.org)

[www.cancersupportfoundation.org](http://www.cancersupportfoundation.org)

## Financial Matters

SB846

Support Bill

Cancer Support Foundation  
Cindy Carter Executive Director

I am Cindy Carter the co-founder of the Critical Medical Needs Program and Executive Director of Cancer Support Foundation. I am here in support of SB846.

The Critical Medical Needs Program was passed into law in 2019. This program is a successful partnership between state agencies, utility companies and non-profits. Navigators are at the core of this success since they are the people who work with those in need of assistance in this program.

This program was created because those who are ill were not able to manage the application process to get the grants available through Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP). Many of our clients were not able to apply for the necessary grants. They called us when the power was about to go off or was off in their homes. This program has made a real difference for these families. However, there are limits since people must work with a trained and certified Navigator that works in CMNP. At the present the program does not have a list of Navigators to choose from. A client must be working with a organization or medical facility that has a VOLUNTEER Navigator.

SB846 establishes a program for a paid Navigator through 211 and one-half position in the Fuel Fund to handle additional grant needs. To have 211 as the paid Navigators for CMNP and their partnership with the Fuel Fund just makes sense. CMNP solves a major issue for the most vulnerable. A core of Navigators who are always there is vital to CMNP continued success.



## Cancer Support Foundation

For many years 211 has sent us cancer patients for extra assistance. They have all of the qualifications that one would look for when choosing a partner to strengthen a program:

- Established
- Known in the Community
- Good Advertisement about CMNP
- Process already in place
- System that has a proven track record of providing assistance
- Already work with several of the CMNP partners
- Work closely with Fuel Fund so increase of cases and extra funding for Fuel Fund in this bill has been addressed
- Home visits for those who are home bound with follow up through a Navigator.

Sixteen years ago, Cancer Support Foundation started working with Department of Human Services (DHS) which includes the Office of Home Energy Program (OHEP) We have assisted over sixteen thousand cancer families most requiring assistance from these agencies. Our referrals come from the local health departments, hospitals, American Cancer Society, and multiple local organizations and cancer groups.

I think that it is important to understand why there is even a need for Navigators to be available to work with those who have medical challenges. The state has over 20 OHEP offices across the state and Baltimore City that offer in person, mail in or online avenues to get assistance. Cancer Support Foundation has worked with them all over our sixteen years.

DHS states that they do have a home visit policy. We have tried to work with OHEP office to get help for our homebound clients through that policy. Each OHEP office has its own interpretation of the home visit policy even some denying the existence such a policy.

In an effort to help our clients, we tried to work within the system that a local office provides. We found out very soon that most of the local offices did not have a triage system for those who are very ill and cannot wait for hours to be seen. Our clients had to leave without getting any assistance.



Cancer Support Foundation, Inc.

We then went to a system where we would make an appointment for our most medically challenged clients to meet one on one with an agent at a specific time at the local OHEP office. Appointments were not honored and clients unable to wait and had to leave without assistance.

Then we started requesting a phone call interview since we could not keep resending clients to local offices to be turned away. Sometimes that worked but was a real challenge to set up and we still had issues with getting the call to be successful.

I found out that DHS had a policy that they would do home visits for those who are home bound. Well, we had offices that said there was no such policy and those who said that there was a policy for that but that they did not perform home visits.

In 2016 the Director of OHEP at that time started getting directors in many of the OHEP offices trained in the program that would get passed into law in 2019 as the Critical Medical Needs Program. Even with this partnership getting appointments, and home visits were impossible. Because of lack of cooperation with the local offices we would ask the state level OHEP office to intervene to get home visits.

We had one client on oxygen bedridden and in hospice situation. She had a relative caring for her who had tried several times to work with the local office to get the grants to keep their power on. We were called and requested a home visit. Well weeks went by and we were forced to get a 30 day medical hold to protect this family from termination of service. Meanwhile we worked with the local and state level OHEP offices to get the visit done. The home visit never did happen and the client passed just days before the medical hold ended.

DHS/OHEP policy of home visits for those who are ill is not the answer. A client would have to find an advocate that can fight for weeks to get it done. This situation has been one of the reasons that the CMNP was created.

Getting the application done is just one of the issues in working with the OHEP offices. Getting the process completed to the issuing of the grant is for many a major stumbling block. A core of Navigators working one on one with clients to get both the application and done make sure the process is complete is what makes the difference for these clients. That one-on-one attention is at the core of the CMNP being so successful.



Cancer Support Foundation, Inc.

A core of Navigators through 211 and Fuel Fund makes sense since we are working with companies that have a proven track record for assisting people in need. Power to the People plan has a provision for home visits that may be needed through 211.

Cancer Support Foundation is asking for favorable action on SB846. My sixteen years of working with the state agencies and thousands of clients has proven to me that we need a system that takes care of the most vulnerable in the state. CMNP was created to do just that. We need to make sure that it stays strong and continue to meet the needs of more people who qualify.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cindy Carter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cindy Carter  
Executive Director  
Cancer Support Foundation