

SB 907 Sponsor Amendments

Uploaded by: Benson, Joanne

Position: FAV



SB0907/753525/1

AMENDMENTS
PREPARED
BY THE
DEPT. OF LEGISLATIVE
SERVICES

26 FEB 21
09:57:51

BY: Senator Benson
(To be offered in the Finance Committee)

AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL 907
(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 1, in line 3, strike “prohibiting” and substitute “requiring”; and in the same line, strike “from requiring” and substitute “to allow a certain amount of time for an individual to provide”.

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 3, in line 8, strike “MAY NOT REQUIRE” and substitute “SHALL ALLOW”; and in the same line, after “INDIVIDUAL” insert “90 DAYS AFTER APPLYING FOR ASSISTANCE”.

SB 907 Human Services - Critical Medical Needs Pro

Uploaded by: Bresnahan, Tammy

Position: FAV



200 St. Paul Place, #2510 | Baltimore, MD 21202
1-866-542-8163 | Fax: 410-895-0269 | TTY: 1-877-434-7598
aarp.org/md | mdaarp@aarp.org | twitter: @aarpmaryland
facebook.com/aarpmid

**SB 907 Human Services - Critical Medical Needs Program - Application for Assistance
Favorable
Senate Finance Committee
March 11, 2021**

Good afternoon Chairwoman Kelley and Members of the Senate Finance Committee. My name is Tammy Bresnahan. I am the Director of Advocacy for AARP Maryland. As you know, AARP Maryland is one of the largest membership-based organizations, encompassing more than 850,000 members. AARP MD overwhelmingly supports **SB 907 Human Services - Critical Medical Needs Program - Application for Assistance**. We thank Senator Benson for sponsoring this important legislation.

AARP is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, nationwide organization that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse.

SB 907 allows a person over 60 using a navigator will not be required to provide a medical certificate. This will fast track assistance an eliminating an onerous step. While AARP normally does not advocate on age related legislation, this bill will make it easier for an individual to get the assistance they need especially an individual who has chronic illness.

AARP supports making it easier to ensure those with critical medical needs are not subject to utility disconnection and get the help they need to manage their utility bills. We therefore support the bill.

AARP believes that policymakers should ensure consumers have access to reliable, safe, and high-quality utility electric and gas services. Services should be offered at just and reasonable rates. Fair terms and conditions, as well as minimum service standard protections, must be included.



AARP also believes that policymakers should prohibit unfair, deceptive, or abusive acts or practices. These include unfair early termination penalties and misleading marketing practices.

For these reasons, we ask for a FAVORABLE report on SB 907. If you have questions, please contact Tammy Bresnahan at tbresnahan@aarp.org or by calling 410-302-8451.

SB907_FUELFUND_FAVORABLE.pdf

Uploaded by: Brown, Debbie

Position: FAV



Economic Matters
SB 907 - Favorable Response

Debbie Brown, Director, Fuel Fund of Maryland

Thank you, Chairman Kelley and members of the Finance Committee. My name is Debbie Brown. I am honored to be the Director at the Fuel Fund of Maryland.

I am here today testifying **in support of SB 907** which would prohibit the Office of Home Energy Programs, OHEP, from requiring medical certification when an individual over the age of 60 applies for assistance from the critical medical needs program.

Any reduction in required documentation will benefit clients over the age of 60, since this demographic lacks the most access to technology, and would instead streamline the process to provide OHEP assistance.

SB 907 will not affect any current Fuel Fund procedures. At present, we accept a verbal or written (email) statement from a client or their proxy that the client has a qualifying medical condition when considering a client for the FFM critical medical needs assistance.

The Fuel Fund of Maryland wants to be a partner in the solution to protect critical medical needs patients, especially those over the age of 60, stay safely connected to the power they so desperately need during a health crisis.

On behalf of the Fuel Fund of Maryland, I respectfully urge a favorable report for **SB 907**. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions.

SB907 lh.pdf

Uploaded by: Carter, Cindy

Position: FAV



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

Phone: 410.964.9563
Email: info@cancersupportfoundation.org

www.cancersupportfoundation.org

Finance Committee

SB907

Support

Cancer Support Foundation
Cindy Carter Executive Director

I am Cindy Carter the Co-Founder of the Critical Medical Needs Program (CMNP) as well as Executive Director of Cancer Support Foundation here today in favor of SB907.

CMNP was passed into law in 2019 and has proven so far to be very successful to those who are able to access the program. Access to the program for our clients who are 60 years old and above is why I am here today.

This group is amongst the most vulnerable group of citizens who are trying to get the grants offered each year through the state energy assistance programs. These grants as well as helping with keeping the lights and heat on also helps with programs that assist with repair and or replacement of appliances in homes.

CMNP was created because those who were medically challenged had so many barriers to the application process with the regular avenue to apply for Office of Energy Home program (OHEP) grants. CMNP was created to overcome those barriers and is very successful with working with this group of citizens. This addition to CMNP would help with reducing a barrier to those 60 years and older.



Cancer Support Foundation

SB907

To participate in the program a client needs to have medical issues and work with a trained Navigator. A Physicians' Certification is needed to be signed by a medical provider of the client as well. This certificate indicates that power needs to be kept on because of a medical challenge.

In the sixteen years that we have been in business, we have found that in general those who are 60 years old plus usually need more hand holding to get through the application process. The backup documents that are needed for this process are usually in the home ie photo id social security cards. The Physician's Certification is a form that needs to be given to a doctor's office to be signed and then back to the client. Many times, this requires a physical back and forth since many clients do not have the technology to accomplish. In this time with the pandemic this process has been even harder. To compound the issue if you have tried to contact a physician's office lately, you will know that customer service has become more of a challenge.

The majority of the Navigators included in this program which is approximately 300 and growing, do an excellent job at making sure that the OHEP applications submitted in CMNP are complete. The Navigators are doing most of the work on these applications thus making the rest of the processing run very smoothly for the CMNP Team on the state level.

Allowing the 60 plus group of clients to be able to work with the Navigators and not have to provide a Physician's Certification up front would make this program work more efficiently and not jeopardize the integrity of CMNP. It makes sense in the world that seniors are living in now.

There is an amendment that would allow the physicians certification to be obtained within 90 days after the application is done. This keeps these clients within the requirements of CMNP but allows for the special situations that many 60 plus client's face.

For several years before CMNP became law in 2019 Cancer Support Foundation and Office of Peoples Counsel were the organizations that requested from the utility companies 30 day medical holds for everyone in the program. About a third of all clients needed them. Our groups of trained Navigators would call with situations where the client was about to lose their power. Families were in a crisis and the applications could not be entered and a 55 day hold placed quickly enough. Many of these clients had already used up their 7-10 day extensions granted by the utility companies. These 30 day holds were placed before physicians certifications came in with the application.



Cancer Support Foundation

SB907

This bill makes it easier for Navigators to work with those who are 60 yr and over. This bill only applies to those who are working with Navigators in CMNP.

Once CMNP passed into law and the processing was done in a centralized location, we have very few 30 day medical holds required. Navigators are able to get the applications in and a 55 day hold if needed is applied before the grants are processed. Getting a 30 day medical hold is not effected by when a physicians certification comes in during the application process.

SB907 is a necessary addition to CMNP that helps our most vulnerable, our seniors. These clients are required to work with the trained Navigators in CMNP so we feel that the integrity of the program is not being jeopardized. We are asking for a favorable report on SB907.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cindy Carter".

Cindy Carter
Executive Director
Cancer Support Foundation

2021 NASW SB 907 Senate Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Faulkner, Rachael

Position: FAV

March 11, 2021

Support of SENATE BILL 907

Human Services – Critical Medical Needs Program – Application for Assistance

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, Maryland Chapter (NASW-MD), we would like to express our support for Senate Bill 907, Human Services – Critical Medical Needs Program – Application for Assistance.

This bill requires the Office of Home Energy Programs to accept applications for the Critical Medical Needs Program from vulnerable older adults who are assisted by a navigator, without requiring the submission of certification from their health care provider. By easing the requirements to enroll in this life-saving program, the bill will allow more seniors to participate.

The individuals who need this program are those who rely on electric or gas service to operate life-sustained equipment such as oxygen systems, nebulizers, mobility devices, Hoyer lifts and other machinery. Many of them live on low, fixed incomes and struggle to meet their basic needs; thus, they are often at risk of a gas or electric turn-off due to inability to pay their utility bills. Even a short-term interruption of power to their homes could result in devastating deterioration in health, or even death. The navigators who work with them are aware of their health conditions and the severity of the emergency that a utility shut-off would create. Thus, it is humane to drop the requirement that these individuals, in addition to working with a navigator, must submit medical documentation, especially since many lack transportation to get to the doctor as often as they need to.

As social workers serving older adults, we so often see frail elders who must choose between buying food and medicine or paying their gas and electric bills. We know an 82-year old woman in Baltimore who uses a nebulizer but must keep her house very cold and cut back on groceries because she can't afford her BGE bill. A 79-year old man in Silver Spring cuts his pills in half so he can have enough money for the electricity that heats his apartment and powers his electric wheelchair. By reducing the barriers for these vulnerable people to participate in the Critical Medical Needs Program, the bill will ease the anxiety that an unexpected expense will result in a catastrophic turn-off and a resulting health emergency. Moreover, this bill will save the lives of struggling older adults.

COVID-19 has highlighted the health inequities facing our most vulnerable Marylanders. Passage of this bill will help a group of seniors who urgently need our support.

We urge you to vote YES on SB 907.

Thank you,

NASW-MD Committee on Aging

sb 907.pdf

Uploaded by: LINDENBERGER, ROBIN

Position: FAV

Edward J. Lee, M.D.
Tejaswi R. Sastry, M.D.
Mohit Narang, M.D.
Andrew S. Mener, M.D.
Yousuf A. Gaffar, M.D.
Adam Schuckler, PA-C, MMSc
Laura Hostovich, AOCNP
Yanxia Li, CRNP
Michele Reilly CRNP
Amy Tissiere, LCSW-C, OSW-C



MARYLAND
ONCOLOGY
HEMATOLOGY

10710 Charter Drive, Suite G020
Columbia, MD 21044
phone (410) 964-2212
fax (410) 964-0380
www.marylandoncology.com

Finance Committee

SB 907

Support Bill

Maryland Oncology Hematology
Robin Lindenberger Patient Advocate

Good Afternoon Finance Committee,

I am Robin Lindenberger, Patient Advocate at Maryland Oncology Hematology of Columbia and I am here today in favor of SB 907.

The Critical Medical Needs Program has been instrumental in helping our patients during this unfortunate time in their lives. During a time where they are worried about how they will afford their medications and treatment regimens this program keeps their electric on. The program also provides heating fuel and assistance with weather proofing their homes. Our patients have received help with insulation around their doors and windows as well as repair and or replacement of appliances to have the most energy efficient home.

The majority of our patients are 60 years old and older. These patients need our help to navigate the CMNP. Many do not have computers or access to computers/scanners and printers. We as navigators have the patient collect the appropriate documents to be scanned and forwarded to the CMNP. The Physicians Certification is completed and signed by their medical provider. While it is easy for us to do this there are many navigators who do not work at a medical office. I know for a fact especially during this pandemic, patients can not always get transportation to their appointments and don't have the technology to do a virtual visit. I am in support of SB 907 to permit all people over the age of 60 to not have to obtain a Physician Certification form. This would allow our most vulnerable population to have access to the program faster and more efficiently.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robin Lindenberger". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Robin Lindenberger

SB907 Final.pdf

Uploaded by: Montgomery, Endia

Position: FAV

STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF PEOPLE’S COUNSEL
David S. Lapp, Acting People’s Counsel
6 St. Paul Street, Suite 2102
Baltimore, Maryland 21202
410-767-8150; 800-207-4055
www.opc.maryland.gov

BILL NO.: **Senate Bill 907**
Human Services
Critical Medical Needs Program
Application for Assistance

COMMITTEE: **Senate Finance**

HEARING DATE: **March 11, 2021**

SPONSOR: **Senator Benson**

POSITION: **Support**

The Office of People’s Counsel supports Senate Bill 907 with the sponsor’s amendments. The Critical Medical Needs Program reduces barriers to home energy assistance applications for critically medically vulnerable individuals. The Program’s key feature expedites OHEP applications for those who meet the statutory and regulatory definitions of a critically medically vulnerable individual and follow the OHEP process requiring confirmation by the individual’s healthcare provider. A normal OHEP application for assistance processes within 45 days; the Critical Medical Needs Program fast tracks processing for the most vulnerable individuals.

Senate Bill 907 seeks to lower barriers to the Critical Medical Needs Program for medically vulnerable 60+ adults. With the sponsor’s amendment, it allows individuals 90 days after applying for assistance to submit their medical certification form signed by their healthcare provider. Not requiring the upfront certification allows the navigator to begin the Critical Medical Needs Program process and enables the Program to more quickly address the energy needs of this vulnerable population.

Recommendation: Office of People’s Counsel supports Senate Bill 907 with the sponsor’s amendments.

SB907-FAVORABLE-ENERGY SUPPLIER REFORM COALITION.p

Uploaded by: Peltier, Laurel

Position: FAV

FAVORABLE SB907

Human Services - Critical Medical Needs Program - Application for Assistance

Laurel Peltier, March 11, 2021

Thank you, Chairwoman Kelley, co-chair Feldman and members of the Senate Finance Committee.

I'm a Critical Medical Needs Program Navigator (CMNP) volunteer in Baltimore City through the GEDO CARES community center. This program piggybacks the OHEP application program and is designed to help residents who have serious health issues get energy assistance faster with the help of a person who can ensure their application is correct, all of the verification documents are included (you would not believe how many people don't have them all).

The biggest CMNP benefit a sick person gets is faster access to utility bill grants because their OHEP application doesn't churn through the normal process. CMNP applications are sent into the state office and processed super-fast.

I can share that the seniors I work with are technically challenged. I mean no smart phones, no wi-fi, no printers, no PCs, pretty much no tech. They live a lo-tech world and in order to get their Physician's Certification signed, they would use the USPS, mail in the certificate and then wait for it to be returned through USPS. Or, maybe faxed to the navigator. And many are really sick.

I will share a story of a gentleman who qualified for CMNP. After 4 calls into Healthcare for the Homeless, 3 faxes and getting to know a great lady at the Director of Records, the physician's

certificate was faxed back to CARES. It took 4 weeks, and nothing was getting in the way of the certificate.

But, that's a lot to ask of navigators who help CMNP clients because they want to help.

Navigators are trained on all the details of CMNP, how to do the program right and when it's a regular OHEP application and when does one qualify for CMNP. Not having to get a Physician's Certificate for Seniors would ensure that all the CMNP applications go in, and don't get stopped because it's tough, if not impossible at times, to obtain a doctor signature on a paper form.

Thank you.