



HB0378

2024 ~~HB~~ HB0378

Position: **Support**

Background:

For the past 35 years, Food & Friends has been providing freshly prepared, home-delivered medically tailored meals, groceries and nutrition counseling to individuals living with illnesses such as cancer, kidney disease and HIV/AIDS. We were founded in 1988 by residents of Washington D.C. who wanted to take care of their neighbors with AIDS, and last year we home-delivered almost 1.9 million meals to nearly 4,900 people across the DMV. In Maryland, we delivered 791,283 medically tailored meals, groceries and medical nutrition therapy to 2,328 clients and their dependents.

We know from research that medically tailored meals improve health outcomes while reducing healthcare costs for those with multiple serious and chronic illnesses. We rely on 60 staff and a network of thousands of volunteers to complete our work each year. A community-based organization in the truest sense of the word.

Why we support ~~HB~~ HB0378:

Our staff Registered Dietitians (RDs) follow the eligibility requirements, standards and dietary specifications set by the national Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. We support the State of Maryland's legislation to follow these standards, ensuring the highest standard of care for Marylanders.

Rigorous nutrition standards are crucial to lifesaving care that is available through Food & Friends' medical nutrition therapy and medically tailored meals. Our RDs conduct medical nutrition therapy assessments, track changes in clients' nutrition status and help clients set attainable health goals. They identify and address symptoms occurring because of disease or treatment/medication side effects, uniquely layering up to three diet plans to address individual needs such as pureed meals due to swallowing difficulties. They engage collaboratively with the clients to provide lifestyle support and long-term management as well as help clients prevent or reduce the impact of nutritional deficiencies that may occur because of illness. Our medically tailored meal menus and diets are developed in collaboration between our team of Registered Dietitians and our chefs. All meals meet the dietary specifications of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics as well as the Food Is Medicine Coalition's Accredited nutrition quality standards.

Carrie Stoltzfus
Executive Director

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