

HOUSE BILL 945

O1, C5

11r2084

By: **Delegate Carey**

Introduced and read first time: February 2, 2021

Assigned to: Economic Matters

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Human Services – Critical Medical Needs Program – Application for Assistance**

3 FOR the purpose of prohibiting the Office of Home Energy Programs from requiring certain
4 medical certification when an individual applies for assistance from the Critical
5 Medical Needs Program if the applicant is at least a certain age and assisted by a
6 navigator; and generally relating to the application for assistance from the Critical
7 Medical Needs Program.

8 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

9 Article – Human Services

10 Section 5–5A–08

11 Annotated Code of Maryland

12 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2020 Supplement)

13 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
14 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

15 **Article – Human Services**

16 5–5A–08.

17 (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

18 (2) “CMN Program” means the Critical Medical Needs Program
19 established under this section.

20 (3) “Critical medically vulnerable individual” means an individual who:

21 (i) has a severe health condition that will be aggravated due to the
22 termination or noncontinuation of electric or gas service or needs the use of life–support
23 equipment as documented and certified in accordance with regulations on a certification of

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 serious illness or life support form submitted to the appropriate electric or gas company;

2 (ii) has or will have their electric or gas service terminated for
3 nonpayment; and

4 (iii) is unable to complete the energy assistance applications under
5 available energy assistance programs, including energy efficiency programs offered by the
6 Department of Housing and Community Development.

7 (4) “Navigator” means a representative from a medical facility or from a
8 public or private assistance agency or organization who:

9 (i) is in personal contact with a critical medically vulnerable
10 individual; and

11 (ii) assists the critical medically vulnerable individual in the energy
12 assistance application process.

13 (b) (1) There is a CMN Program in the Office.

14 (2) The Office shall implement and administer the CMN Program.

15 (3) In administering the CMN Program, the Office shall partner with the
16 Office of People’s Counsel, the Fuel Fund of Central Maryland, the Cancer Support
17 Foundation, electric and gas companies, nonprofit organizations, other State agencies, the
18 health care community, and any other organization that the Office determines appropriate.

19 (4) The purpose of the CMN Program is to reduce the barriers to the energy
20 assistance application process for critical medically vulnerable individuals and their
21 households in obtaining State and federal financial assistance for their electric, gas, or
22 other energy source bills so that their electric, gas, or other energy source service continues
23 or is restored.

24 (c) (1) The CMN Program shall facilitate assistance to critical medically
25 vulnerable individuals and their households in obtaining State and federal financial
26 assistance for their electric, gas, or other source energy bills through navigators.

27 (2) The Office shall determine qualifications and establish training
28 requirements for navigators.

29 (3) The Office shall train navigators or facilitate the training of navigators
30 by others.

31 (d) In accordance with the requirements set forth in the Code of Maryland
32 Regulations, the Office shall work with electric and gas companies to implement, for critical
33 medically vulnerable individuals:

1 (1) a medical hold on electric or gas service or an expedited process to grant
2 the extension of electric or gas service for those who will have their electric or gas services
3 terminated; and

4 (2) an expedited process for the restoration of electric or gas service for
5 those who have had their electric or gas service terminated.

6 (e) **IF A CRITICAL MEDICALLY VULNERABLE INDIVIDUAL IS AT LEAST 60**
7 **YEARS OLD AND ASSISTED BY A NAVIGATOR WHEN APPLYING TO PARTICIPATE IN**
8 **THE CMN PROGRAM, THE OFFICE MAY NOT REQUIRE THE INDIVIDUAL TO PROVIDE**
9 **CERTIFICATION FROM A MEDICAL PROVIDER OF THE SEVERE HEALTH CONDITION.**

10 **(F)** The Office shall establish a tracking system of the status of critical medically
11 vulnerable individuals who participate in the CMN Program.

12 **[(f)] (G)** The Department shall adopt regulations to implement this section.

13 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June
14 1, 2021.