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Finance

SB905 – SUPPORT

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Eileen O'Connor-Liebman, Patient Advocate
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To: Senator Benson and esteemed members of the Senate Finance Committee

RE: Testimony in Support of SB 905 - OHEP - Silver Energy Savers Program & Energy Assistance Fund

Dear Senator Benson and esteemed members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I am Eileen O'Connor-Liebman, Patient Advocate for Maryland Oncology Hematology in Columbia Maryland writing today in favor of SB905.

The Critical Medical Needs Program (CMNP) started as a Pilot Program in our office in Spring of 2015. We were beyond excited and honored to be a part of the process when it was passed into law in Spring of 2019. This program is a successful partnership between state agencies, utility companies, trained navigators and non-profits.

Silver Energy Savers Program & Energy Assistance Fund SB905 would allow seniors who are not able to ambulate well or at all; seniors who do not have access to internet nor are able to navigate the system since they are not technology savvy call in and speak to a human on the telephone. That one-on-one assistance to help them enroll in OHEP applications is priceless. Patients feel so defeated when they attempt to navigate the system to get the much-deserved help they need and qualify for and fail due to a broken system. This would be a significant benefit for seniors as many of them really struggle with the application & gathering of documents. It is also extremely difficult for them to get to a local OHEP office. The last several applications that I have helped process were patients over 65 years of age. You can hear the frustration, embarrassment and overwhelmingness in their voice when helping them navigate the system. Many of our seniors are often being cared for by various family members at different times and that scenario makes it incredibly difficult to maneuver. The **Silver Energy Savers Program & Energy Assistance Fund** will help the most vulnerable residents across the state apply for the energy assistance grants that are available for those who qualify. SB905 is a necessary and vital component that will help our most vulnerable, our seniors. We are in support and are asking for a favorable report on SB905.

Sincerely,



Eileen O'Connor-Liebman, Patient Advocate