

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.