

SENATE BILL 1024

O1, C5, M5

0lr1818
CF HB 938

By: **Senator Benson**

Introduced and read first time: February 13, 2020

Assigned to: Rules

Re-referred to: Finance, February 17, 2020

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: March 14, 2020

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Home Energy Assistance – Critical Medical Needs Program – Power to the**
3 **People Pilot Program**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring the Office of Home Energy Programs, in coordination with
5 the United Way of Central Maryland and the Fuel Fund of Maryland, to establish
6 the Power to the People Pilot Program on or before a certain date; stating the purpose
7 of the Pilot Program; requiring the Pilot Program to provide training for certain
8 individuals to serve as navigators under the Critical Medical Needs Program;
9 requiring the United Way of Central Maryland to develop a certain screening intake
10 process; requiring certain intake specialists to perform certain duties; requiring the
11 Fuel Fund of Maryland to provide certain services; requiring the Governor to include
12 a certain amount in the annual State budget for the Pilot Program; requiring that
13 certain funds be used in a certain manner; altering a certain definition; defining a
14 certain term; providing for the termination of this Act; and generally relating to the
15 Power to the People Pilot Program.

16 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
17 Article – Human Services
18 Section 5–5A–08
19 Annotated Code of Maryland
20 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2019 Supplement)

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

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



Article – Human Services

5–5A–08.

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

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

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

(i) has a severe health condition that will be aggravated due to the termination or noncontinuation of electric or gas service or needs the use of life–support equipment as documented and certified in accordance with regulations on a certification of serious illness or life support form submitted to the appropriate electric or gas company;

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

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

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

(i) 1. is in personal contact with a critical medically vulnerable individual; and

[(ii)] 2. assists the critical medically vulnerable individual in the energy assistance application process; OR

(II) HAS COMPLETED TRAINING THROUGH THE PILOT PROGRAM ESTABLISHED UNDER SUBSECTION (F) OF THIS SECTION.

(5) “PILOT PROGRAM” MEANS THE POWER TO THE PEOPLE PILOT PROGRAM ESTABLISHED UNDER THIS SECTION.

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

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

(3) In administering the CMN Program, the Office shall partner with the Office of People’s Counsel, the Fuel Fund of Central Maryland, the Cancer Support

1 Foundation, electric and gas companies, nonprofit organizations, other State agencies, the
2 health care community, and any other organization that the Office determines appropriate.

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

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

11 (2) The Office shall determine qualifications and establish training
12 requirements for navigators.

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

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

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

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

23 (e) The Office shall establish a tracking system of the status of critical medically
24 vulnerable individuals who participate in the CMN Program.

25 **(F) (1) ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2021, THE OFFICE, IN COORDINATION**
26 **WITH THE UNITED WAY OF CENTRAL MARYLAND AND THE FUEL FUND OF**
27 **MARYLAND, SHALL ESTABLISH THE POWER TO THE PEOPLE PILOT PROGRAM.**

28 **(2) THE PURPOSE OF THE PILOT PROGRAM IS TO EXPAND ACCESS TO**
29 **THE CMN PROGRAM.**

30 **(3) THE PILOT PROGRAM SHALL PROVIDE TRAINING FOR 2-1-1**
31 **MARYLAND UNITED WAY HELPLINE INTAKE SPECIALISTS AND CASE MANAGERS TO**
32 **SERVE AS NAVIGATORS.**

33 **(4) THE UNITED WAY OF CENTRAL MARYLAND SHALL ESTABLISH A**
34 **SCREENING INTAKE PROCESS TO IDENTIFY CALLERS TO THE 2-1-1 MARYLAND**

1 UNITED WAY HELPLINE WHO MAY BE CRITICAL MEDICALLY VULNERABLE
2 INDIVIDUALS.

3 (5) 2-1-1 MARYLAND UNITED WAY HELPLINE INTAKE SPECIALISTS
4 SHALL:

5 (I) CONDUCT BASIC SCREENING TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE
6 CALLER IS A CRITICAL MEDICALLY VULNERABLE INDIVIDUAL;

7 (II) ASSIST CRITICAL MEDICALLY VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS
8 AND THEIR HOUSEHOLDS WITH:

9 1. THE COLLECTION OF MATERIALS AND INFORMATION
10 REQUIRED TO COMPLETE AN APPLICATION FOR ENERGY ASSISTANCE; AND

11 2. THE COMPLETION AND SUBMISSION OF
12 APPLICATIONS FOR ENERGY ASSISTANCE; AND

13 (III) REFER INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE UNABLE TO PAY THEIR
14 UTILITY BILLS TO THE FUEL FUND OF MARYLAND FOR ADDITIONAL CASH
15 ASSISTANCE AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES.

16 (6) THE FUEL FUND OF MARYLAND SHALL:

17 (I) COORDINATE WITH THE OFFICE AND THE UNITED WAY OF
18 CENTRAL MARYLAND TO ASSIST CRITICAL MEDICALLY VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS
19 WITH PAYING ANY REMAINING BALANCE OWED ON THEIR ELECTRIC, GAS, OR OTHER
20 SOURCE ENERGY BILLS; AND

21 (II) PROVIDE ADDITIONAL CASH ASSISTANCE AND COMMUNITY
22 RESOURCES TO CRITICAL MEDICALLY VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS.

23 (7) (I) FOR FISCAL YEARS 2022 AND 2023, THE GOVERNOR SHALL
24 INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL BUDGET BILL AN APPROPRIATION OF ~~\$160,000~~ \$80,000
25 TO THE OFFICE FOR THE PILOT PROGRAM.

26 (II) THE FUNDS APPROPRIATED UNDER SUBPARAGRAPH (I) OF
27 THIS PARAGRAPH SHALL BE USED TO HIRE:

28 1. ONE ~~FULL-TIME~~ PART-TIME INTAKE SPECIALIST FOR
29 THE 2-1-1 MARYLAND UNITED WAY HELPLINE;

30 2. ONE ~~FULL-TIME~~ PART-TIME CASE MANAGER FOR THE
31 2-1-1 MARYLAND UNITED WAY HELPLINE; AND

1 **3. ONE PART-TIME PROJECT COORDINATOR AT THE**
2 **FUEL FUND OF MARYLAND.**

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

4 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
5 1, 2020. It shall remain effective for a period of ~~3~~ 4 years and, at the end of June 30, ~~2023~~
6 2024, this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated
7 and of no further force and effect.

Approved:

Governor.

President of the Senate.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.