

## Navigating Utility Law to Help your Patients

Connecticut law protects some patients from termination of gas and electric service.

### Medical Protection

#### Life Threatening Illness

A physician must designate that the patient has a life threatening illness such that the absence of heat or electricity will put the patient's life at risk. The standard for "Life Threatening" designation is a medical need for utility service (rather than terminal illness). Examples include: refrigerated medication, nebulizer required, etc.

#### Serious Illness

A physician must designate that his/her patient has a "Serious Illness." This designation can stop utility services from being terminated only during winter months (from Nov. 1 - May 1).

#### Infant Protection

Connecticut law protects children less than two years of age following hospital discharge. A physician can designate that based on the child's "health and well-being" the utilities in the household should be protected from termination.

### Submitting a Medical Protection Form

Medical protection forms may be sent directly to providers by the utility companies. Call 211 INFOLINE for utility company contact information.

The physician (not a P.A. or social worker) must sign and submit a Medical Protection Form online for the patient.



### Hardship or Winter Protection

Low income patients are protected from termination (heat and electric) from Nov.1 - May 1. After May 1, utility companies may terminate service to customers in arrears. Your patient must contact the utility companies directly. The medical provider does not need to provide information for the patient to access hardship or winter protection.

#### Electric Service

Must be reinstated on Nov. 1 even if service was terminated and even if arrearage remains.

#### Gas Service

Must be reinstated on Nov. 1, but if service was terminated based on account arrearage, patient must pay \$100 or 20% of arrearage, whichever is less.

### Utility Resources for Patients

211 INFOLINE

- Call to apply for Energy Assistance (special grants to assist with heat arrearage)
- Get phone numbers for utility companies (ask about programs for people with limited income)
- Get phone number for Community Action agencies (for help with resources)

#### Questions?

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