



May 31, 2022

The Honorable P. Scott Lipps
Chairman
House Health Committee
Ohio House of Representatives
77 S. High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

RE: House Bill 608 – Written Proponent Testimony

Dear Chairman Lipps,

I am Eddie Pauline, President and CEO of BioOhio, Ohio's only statewide bioscience industry organization. We represents nearly 300 member organizations and a broader bioscience ecosystem comprised of thousands of business leaders and employees, across our state.

I am here today on behalf of all of them in support of H.B. 608.

H.B. 608 will not only save Ohioans' lives by creating a pathway for targeted, precision treatment, we believe the more accurate diagnoses and treatment would lead to reduced costs for patients and the health care system overall.

I say this because research shows that the use of biomarkers may permit optimizing treatment regimens without compromising health outcomes. This has significant implications for healthcare payers in containing expenditures that provide no or minimal benefits to patients. In other words, biomarkers move us towards more efficient health care.

Biomarkers give healthcare providers essential information about a person's genetics, pathogenic processes and likely responses to specific treatments. Without that testing, providers are often shooting in the dark,



trying more treatments and therapies that are less effective for an individual and run up the cost for health care. By requiring insurance coverage for biomarker testing, providers will more quickly be able to identify the right treatment for each patient, saving additional tests, time and money.

H.B. 608 will also help Ohio's economy. Ohio is quickly becoming a hub for bioscience. Driven in part by the fact our state hosts 15 percent of the country's active clinical trials, ranking 7th among all states and 1st in the Midwest.

There are currently 5,400 clinical trials underway or recruiting this year in Ohio. Clinical trials play a critical role in getting more innovative treatments to market and biomarkers can provide researchers evidence about the safety and efficacy of such treatments and while more data is collected. They can also help patients understand if they are eligible for a clinical trial.

Ohio can send a message that it supports life science innovation by enacting HB 608. We will join California, Illinois, and Louisiana who have already moved forward in support of biomarkers.

We are tied for fourth among states in the number of gene therapy startups and companies. But those businesses do not flourish without the right ecosystem around them, and legislation like H.B. 608 is a crucial part of that.

Our bioscience industry is strong and growing, as many of you already know. The biosciences employ some 83,000 Ohioans at companies ranging from the large and well-known to startups. That employment has increased 15 percent in the last five years, with an average wage of \$84,600. That salary is more than \$30,000 higher than the average wage across all industries. All told, Ohio's bioscience industries generated \$7.1 billion in payroll in 2019, the most recent year for which we have figures available. That is a 21 percent increase over five years.

The biosciences are a sound, smart economic investment for Ohio. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic that disrupted business across our state, Ohio



bioscience companies continued to provide jobs and spend on capital improvements. Since the start of 2020, those companies have invested \$1.6 billion in new facilities and expansions that are projected to create more than 6,400 new jobs.

Again, lets continue to the growth and pass this bill to help attract new companies to our state that are working on innovative treatments. Those business leaders want to see that Ohio supports precision medicine. H.B. 608 will be an important part of our “Why Ohio?” story.

BioOhio appreciates this committee’s passion for the health of Ohioans and of Ohio’s economy. We are asking the Ohio House Health Committee to approve the Biomarker bill to continue advancing both. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eddie Pauline". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names clearly legible.

Eddie Pauline
President and CEO, BioOhio