

To: Members of the Ohio House Health Committee

Fr: Monica Hueckel, Senior Director of Government Relations, Ohio State Medical Association

Da: May 31, 2022

Re: HB 608

---

On behalf of the Ohio State Medical Association (OSMA), the state's oldest and largest professional organization representing Ohio physicians, medical residents, and medical students, we write today in support of House Bill 608, which would require state-regulated health insurance plans, including Medicaid, to provide coverage for biomarker testing when medically appropriate.

Biomarker testing, increasingly used in treatment of diseases like cancer, detects biomarkers in blood, tissues, and other bodily fluids that are signs of abnormal processes, conditions, or diseases. This testing helps physicians to better understand unique characteristics about a patient's cancer on a molecular level, which can better inform treatment choices. For example, some biomarkers can help predict how specific cancer treatments would work in a particular patient's case, helping to match patients with personalized, targeted therapies that are more likely to be effective. For certain types of cancer, biomarker testing is more and more considered the modern standard of care. In fact, many recently-developed oncology drugs either require or recommend biomarker testing for use.

Unfortunately, due to lack of insurance coverage and high out-of-pocket costs, patient access to biomarker testing is currently limited and sparse. The Cancer Action Network predicts that 73,700 Ohioans will receive a cancer diagnosis this year, and over 21,000 will die from cancer. This death rate is higher than the national cancer death rate. By expanding coverage of biomarker testing in Ohio, HB 608 would make it possible for many more patients across the state to obtain the best treatment for their cancers at the right time.

OSMA encourages support for HB 608 to help Ohioans diagnosed with cancer access improved quality of life and reduced treatment costs. Thank you for your consideration of our remarks. As always, we appreciate the opportunity to be meaningful contributors to the legislative process. Please contact us should you have any questions.