



May 27, 2022

Dear Chairman Lipps:

Our organization writes in support of OH 608, which requires coverage of biomarker testing by health plans and the Medicaid program in Ohio. Patients with blood cancers or disorders often need biomarker testing to determine targeted treatment or therapy for their disease.

Be The Match®, operated by the National Marrow Donor Program® (NMDP), is the nation's bone marrow registry and the most diverse registry in the world, with 9 million potential donors in the United States alone. We work with transplant centers and patients to find an unrelated match, coordinate the donation and transportation process, and provide financial and other resources to patients in need of life-saving bone marrow, blood stem cell, or cord blood transplant.

Out of pocket costs can be a significant burden to patients if insurers do not cover the cost of biomarker tests. According to NMDP patient navigators, the cost of biomarker testing for NMDP patients varies widely depending on the type of test, the type of cancer or disease, and insurance plan. The average cost (2021) for a biomarker test is \$1,700, with targeted gene panels being the most common tests.¹

Insurance coverage for biomarker testing is necessary to increase the number of patients who have access to these tests, and to encourage providers to offer these tests to patients to determine the best course of treatment. Patients directly benefit from receiving biomarker testing to determine the most targeted treatment for cancer or chronic disease. Genetic or multigene tests can determine the treatment or therapy with the best potential outcomes for the patient.

Expanding insurance coverage for cellular therapies, including biomarker testing, leads to improved outcomes for patients. Results of a biomarker test can be used to match a patient with a targeted therapy that may be available as an FDA-approved treatment, an [off-label](#) treatment, or help patients qualify for participation in a clinical trial. Targeted therapies have the ability to block or turn off signals that cause cancer cells to grow and divide, prevent the cells from living longer than normal, or destroy cancer cells, and their success depends on identifying a patient's specific biomarker profile.

Proposed legislation to cover comprehensive biomarker testing, such as HB 608, can lead to better health outcomes, improved quality of life and reduced costs. On behalf of our patients across Ohio, we highly encourage the committee to pass HB 608.

Sincerely,

National Marrow Donor Program/Be The Match

¹ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1525157821000052>