



**Dave Dillahunt, Executive Director  
Ohio Hematology Oncology Society  
House Bill 608 Proponent Statement  
House Health Committee  
November 29, 2022**

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Minority Member Liston, and Members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of House Bill 608 regarding biomarker testing coverage. The Ohio Hematology Oncology Society represents nearly 170 oncologists and hematologists in Ohio who treat cancer patients in the private office (community) setting. Community oncology practices treat the majority of patients facing cancer. Our members are located in rural, suburban and urban settings. Practices range in size from 1 to 35 physicians, with most being in the 3-4 physician range.

A tumor marker is a substance found in your blood, urine, or body tissue. The term "tumor marker" may refer to proteins that are made by both healthy cells and cancer cells in the body. It may also refer to mutations, changes, or patterns in a tumor's DNA. Tumor markers are also called biomarkers.

Doctors may use biomarker tests to learn if you have cancer. These tests can also help doctors learn more about your specific cancer and help to plan your specific treatment. Biomarker tests are most commonly used to do the following:

- **Learn if a person has cancer.** Higher tumor marker levels may indicate a certain type of cancer. A biomarker test may be used as a part of your initial diagnosis.
- **Guide treatment decisions.** Some biomarker tests tell doctors if they should give chemotherapy or immunotherapy. Others help doctors determine which drugs may work best for that patient.
- **Check the progress of treatment.** Changes in your tumor marker levels can show how well the treatment is working.
- **Predict the chance of recovery.** Tumor markers can help doctors predict the cancer's behavior and response to treatment. They can also predict your chance of recovery.
- **Predict or watch for recurrence.** Biomarker tests can help predict how likely recurrence is. That's why these tests might be part of your care after treatment ends. They may help find a recurrence sooner than other tests.
- **Predict cancer in high risk patients.** Biomarker tests may also be used to look for cancer in people with a high risk of the disease.

Unfortunately, there is limited and disparate access to biomarker testing. A significant percentage of cancer patients and survivors do not receive biomarker testing because it is not covered by their insurer or the out-of-pocket costs would be too high. A recent study found that 78% of Ohioans are covered by plans that have more restrictive coverage than what is recommended by the National Comprehensive Cancer Network® (NCCN) guidelines for several common cancers.

House Bill 608 would expand coverage of biomarker testing in Ohio and make it possible for more patients to get the right treatment at the right time. This is not only for the best, most effective treatment of cancer for that patient, but it also saves money by possibly avoiding treatment and costs that may not be effective for that patient. For these reasons we respectfully request that the members of the Health Committee support biomarker testing legislation.

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