

November 28, 2022

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

Dear Chairman Lipps and Ohio House Health Committee Members,

On behalf of the Lupus and Allied Diseases Association and the millions of Ohio residents both directly and indirectly affected by autoimmune conditions and other diseases of unmet need, I urge you to please support HB 608 an act to Require health plan and Medicaid coverage of biomarker testing.

As both an individual who struggles to take 48 drugs a day to manage multiple complex autoimmune conditions and as the leader of a patient advocacy organization that represents countless individuals just like me, I passionately urge you to support HB 608 to ensure that Ohio residents have improved access to innovative therapies by facilitating insurance coverage of biomarker testing.

Due to the heterogeneity of autoimmune diseases like lupus, no two patients are alike and treatment is highly individualized. We have been eagerly awaiting more efficacious and safer groundbreaking treatments that target the offending molecule or cell that disrupts our immune system and in a perfect world, people like me would take one pill a day for treatment instead of forty-eight. We desperately need safer, more innovative treatments that address the pathogenesis of diseases, while impacting what matters most to patients—reducing symptoms and improving daily functioning and quality of life. Biomarker testing will provide the path forward to targeted therapies and precision medicine.

As patient stakeholders who represent patients and loved ones dealing with serious medical conditions on a daily basis who strongly support establishing essential patient protections that improve access to vital therapies, we strongly urge your support and passage of HB 608 to ensure Ohio residents covered by state-regulated insurance plans such as Medicaid, have coverage for biomarker testing when medically appropriate. Access to appropriate medication can dramatically improve disease outcome and quality of life and effective treatment can reduce the severity and frequency of disease activity and decelerate its progression, enabling individuals to remain productive.

Ohio has a longstanding record of providing access to affordable healthcare as well as some of the strongest patient protections in the country. By improving coverage and access to biomarker testing across insurance types, HB 608 has the potential to reduce health disparities and inequities for communities of color, individuals with lower socioeconomic status, rural communities, disabled

populations, and those receiving care in non-academic medical centers who are all currently less likely to receive testing for biomarkers.

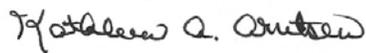
The Lupus and Allied Diseases Association was founded in 1978 and is a national non-profit organization led by people with lupus and allied diseases and their loved ones who are dedicated to ensuring that the patient perspective is included and recognized as an equal stakeholder in the healthcare, regulatory and public policy arenas and across the research continuum. It is our goal to improve access to care and quality of life by fostering collaboration among stakeholders and by wielding the patient voice as a catalyst to advance innovative advocacy, education, awareness and biomedical research initiatives that will identify causes, advance better diagnostics, and discover superior treatments, and cures.

We urge the House Health Committee and state legislature to support HB 608 and stand with patients by helping to advance biomarker testing and ultimately, precision medicine. There are millions of people who could benefit from innovative drugs now, and many more in the future who are yet to be diagnosed. Patients with rare and chronic diseases of unmet need with only limited or no therapies need access to an array of novel, promising treatments and biomarker testing is the key to unlocking the right treatments for the right patients. Public policy must keep pace with innovation.

Please contact me at 315-264-9101 or [kathleen@ladainc.org](mailto:kathleen@ladainc.org) if you have any questions.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide our unique patient viewpoint.

Respectfully Submitted-



Kathleen A. Arntsen  
President & CEO