

Chairman Lipps and Members of the House Health Committee
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Chairman Lipps and Members of the House Health Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 608, which would allow more Ohio residents to benefit from the most effective treatments for arthritis and other health conditions.

Arthritis isn't a single disease; the term refers to joint pain or joint disease, and there are more than 100 types of arthritis and related conditions. People of all ages, races and sexes live with arthritis, and it is the leading cause of disability in the United States. It's most common among women, and although it's not a disease of aging, some types of arthritis occur in older populations and others more predominantly in younger.

Given the complexity of arthritic diseases and demographics impacted, understanding arthritis is the first step in managing it. Symptoms of types of arthritis can vary and even be mistaken for other illnesses and disorders, so biomarker testing is imperative to pinpointing the diagnosis, prognosis and treatment plan.

Considering there are multiple classes of drugs to treat types of arthritis, using biomarker testing can aid in developing precise health plans. Revolutionizing health outcomes through more targeted therapies can lead to improved survivorship and better mobility and quality of life for patients.

Unfortunately, not all communities are benefitting from the latest advancements in biomarker testing. Marginalized communities including communities of color, individuals with lower socioeconomic status, rural communities, and those receiving care in non-academic medical centers are less likely to receive biomarker testing. Improving coverage for and access to biomarker testing across insurance types is key to reducing these health disparities. Coverage for biomarker testing is failing to keep pace with innovations and advancements in treatment, which is why increasing access is an important component in advancing care options for patients.

The Arthritis Foundation thanks the committee for their consideration of HB 608 and urges all members to support this critical legislation to expand access to precision medicine for arthritis patients in Ohio.



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