



March 27, 2023

Dear Honorable Chairman Lampton and distinguished members of the House Committee on Insurance

We are writing to ask for your support of HB 24 which requires coverage of biomarker testing by health plans and Ohio Medical Assistance. Patients with blood cancers or disorders often need biomarker testing to determine targeted treatment or therapy for their disease.

Our top priority is getting patients who suffer from blood cancers and disorders and chronic disease the treatment they need. Biomarker testing is one tool physicians can use to determine the best treatment for their patients. Ensuring access to that testing increases the likelihood that a patient gets the right treatment at the right stage, as well as relieves the stress of possibly having to pay out of pocket for a test they need.

HB 24 will ensure that more Ohioans patients have access to biomarker testing. Research shows that there are disparities in patients who are currently benefitting from biomarker testing – ethnically diverse, and those in rural communities are less likely to be tested. Improving access to biomarker testing is key for reducing disparities in cancer and chronic disease outcomes.

Biomarker testing is the analysis of a patient's tissue, blood, or other biospecimen for the presence of a biomarker. Biomarker testing is an important step for accessing precision medicine, including targeted therapies that can lead to improved survivorship and better quality of life for patients. Additionally, many clinical trials require biomarker testing to identify eligible participants, which gives patients access to new and cutting-edge life-saving treatments.

While the majority of the diseases we facilitate transplants for are blood cancers, biomarker testing is also critical to treating non-malignant chronic diseases such as Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) and graft versus host disease (GvHD). SCD is a chronic disorder which causes the body to make unhealthy red blood cells, causing organ damage, and need for a bone marrow transplant as a life-saving treatment. GvHD is a debilitating and potentially deadly side effect of a bone marrow transplant, in which the donor immune cells attack the patient's healthy cells. It is critical that access to biomarker testing include both malignant cancer and chronic disease to provide determine best treatment and allow for enrollment in clinical trials.

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.



HB 24 aligns coverage of biomarker testing with the latest science, providing a gateway to targeted therapies that can lead to better health outcomes and improved quality of life. Greater access to biomarker testing can allow Ohioans to bypass costly and ineffective treatments by connecting patients with therapies that will be most effective for their individual disease right away. Please support HB 24 to increase access to biomarker testing for Minnesota who could benefit.

Sincerely,

Jocelyn Thompson

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Advocacy Specialists
National Marrow Donor Program/ Be The Match