

Proponent Testimony – House Bill 8

Chair Schmidt and members of the House Health Committee.

My name is Tom Pamer and I am a proud lifelong resident of Springfield, Ohio. I am a husband to my wife of 20 years, Hillary, and father to my teenage son, Joshua. I am involved in my community, church, an active cancer advocate, and a Cancer Survivor.

In June 2017, at the age of 47, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. After my biopsy, my Urologist strongly urged me to let him send my sample not only to the lab for the “normal” testing, but also for biomarker genomic testing to determine the aggressiveness of the cancer and which treatments might be most effective. The results of that biomarker testing armed us with the information necessary to make treatment options that gave me the best chance of survival while maintaining my quality of life.

Biomarker testing can help some cancer patients and their caregivers find simpler, less life altering, targeted treatments such as oral chemotherapy that can be taken at home vs. traditional chemotherapy and/or radiation with all its horrific side effects. Without biomarker testing, I would have not had access to the targeted therapy that I credit with saving my life and allowing me to reach the five year “evidence of no disease” mark.

My son was six years old when I was diagnosed and thanks to research, my healthcare team, and biomarker testing, I now get to watch my son grow up, run his track and cross country meets, and share with my wife his journey through life.

Innovations in cancer care, such as biomarker testing and precision medicine, mean my son has an even better chance at seeing a world free from the pain and suffering from cancer. I was fortunate to have insurance coverage for my biomarker testing. Unfortunately, not everyone has access to comprehensive biomarker testing because their insurance doesn’t cover it, and paying for it out-of-pocket is too costly and not possible.

In closing, I know firsthand how important it is to have access to biomarker testing and with your support of HB 8, EVERY Ohioan who needs it will have access to this life-saving resource.

Thank you, Chairman Hackett and members of the Senate Insurance Committee, for considering this legislation. I urge you to pass HB 8.

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