

Proponent Testimony – HB 8, Biomarker Testing

Chair Schmidt, Vice Chair Deeter, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the House Health Committee, I am Cindy Frey from Delaware, OH, and I am a volunteer with the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network.

In 2018, my mom, Rosemary Craig, was diagnosed with lung cancer even though she had never smoked or been exposed to secondhand smoke. She had surgery to remove part of her lung, went through 4 chemotherapy treatments, and 32 radiation treatments.

Everything seemed fine until February 2020, when a CAT scan showed spots in 3 bone areas. A biopsy confirmed her lung cancer was spreading. Chemotherapy came with serious side effects. Her oncologist ordered a special blood test to determine if there were any targeted treatment options. The results showed there were several drugs that might effectively stop or slow the spread and growth of the cancer.

She started taking an oral targeted therapy in June 2020. It kept her cancer from changing, keeping the cancer cells inactive. The side effects from this drug were very minimal, making her quality of life much better than if she had continued with chemo treatments.

In 2020, when her cancer came back, she did one chemo infusion treatment before starting the oral treatment. That one chemo treatment made her very sick, she didn't feel like herself for months. It also caused her to lose all her hair. She was afraid to be around the grandkids because they were 5 and under at the time. It took her hair over a year to grow back. And even longer to look "like Grandma" again. If she had to continue that powerful chemotherapy treatment to fight her cancer, she would not have been able to endure very many of them.

She would not have had the joy of watching her six incredible grandchildren grow up if she had continued chemo treatments. Taking the oral treatment gave her the time to meet and get to know and spend time with her great-granddaughter who was born at the end of September 2024 - giving her one more reason to continue this fight against cancer. Her grandkids and great-granddaughter were a very important part of her life and if biomarker testing hadn't been available to her, she wouldn't have felt well enough to enjoy time with them.

For the past three years, my mom has come to the Statehouse to meet with legislators about passing the biomarker bill. Sadly, my mom passed away in December of 2024. Without biomarker testing, she would not have been able to enjoy the last four years of her life by spending time with her family. The targeted therapy that kept my mom's cancer from spreading would not have been offered to her without biomarker testing.

In memory of my mom, and the many other Ohioans who have lost their lives to cancer, please pass House Bill 8. Give Ohioans who are battling cancer the best chance of fighting this disease.

Cindy Frey
Delaware, OH