

**House Bill 8  
Proponent  
Testimony  
Ohio Heath Committee  
April 30, 2025**

**Barbara Marsh**

**Good morning, Chairperson Schmidt, Vice Chair Deeter, Ranking Member Somani, and Members of the House Health Committee.**

Thank you for the opportunity to present proponent testimony on House Bill 8, which would require health plans and Medicaid to cover biomarker testing.

My name is Barbara Marsh. I am here today as a professional, caretaker, and patient advocate with the Lung Cancer Research Foundation to speak in strong support of this legislation.

Throughout my nearly 30-year career as a doctoral-level social worker in healthcare and public health, I have supported countless patients through difficult diagnoses. However, nothing could have prepared me for the moment my own husband, Todd, was diagnosed with cancer.

In July 2022, a six-centimeter mass was found in the lower left lobe of Todd's lung. After many tests, three biopsies, and consultations, we were told that surgery was not an option. His oncologist ordered biomarker testing to identify genetic mutations that could guide treatment — but the insurance company denied it.

Todd's oncologist was clear: he did not want to begin treatment without the critical information biomarker testing could provide. Despite countless calls, emails, and appeals, the insurance company continued to deny coverage. The lab would not allow us to pay out of pocket.

As we fought for approval, Todd's tumor grew another centimeter, and he was given just six months to live.

Watching Todd lose hope was unbearable. Determined to fight for him, I reached out to colleagues, friends, and national healthcare organizations. Eventually, we connected with The Ohio State University James Cancer Hospital and Solove Research Institute. Their team acted swiftly. Within a week, Todd was diagnosed with non-small cell carcinoma lung cancer, despite his good health history and the fact that he has never smoked.

Todd immediately began an intense treatment regimen: five days a week of radiation, combined with multiple rounds of chemotherapy. Meanwhile, Ohio State advocated for insurance approval for the biomarker testing — but the results did not arrive until after his treatments were completed.

Thankfully, Todd has remained stable since December 2022 and has not required further treatment. We are profoundly grateful to the oncology and radiation teams at Ohio State for saving his life.

If biomarker testing had been available from the start, it could have offered a less invasive, more targeted treatment approach — reducing suffering and potential long-term harm.

As a member of the Lung Cancer Research Foundation Advisory Board, I have learned that biomarker testing is one of the most significant advances in cancer care in decades. Studies show that patients who receive biomarker-driven therapies live longer, experience fewer side effects, and avoid the "trial and error" of traditional chemotherapy. Biomarker testing allows doctors to match the right treatment to the right patient at the right time — improving survival rates and quality of life.

It is not a luxury. It is the future of medicine. And it should be accessible to everyone.

Looking ahead, if Todd ever requires additional treatment, his biomarker testing results will be critical in guiding the next steps.

The passage of House Bill 8 will help ensure that others do not endure the same painful delays we faced. Mandating insurance coverage for biomarker testing will expedite diagnoses, remove financial barriers, expand access to essential diagnostic tools, and create a more equitable and effective healthcare system.

I respectfully urge you to support House Bill 8 and make this vital resource accessible to all who need it.

Thank you again to Representative Andrea White and to the Committee for the opportunity to testify. I am deeply grateful for your time and consideration.