

**Ohio House of Representatives  
House Insurance Committee  
House Bill 24 Proponent Testimony  
Vicki Giambrone  
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Chairman Lampton, Vice Chair Barhorst and members of the House of Insurance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony in support of House Bill 24, which would require health plans and Medicaid to provide coverage of biomarker testing.

My name is Vicki Giambrone and I live in Beavercreek Ohio and over the past 40 years, I have been diagnosed with cancer four times and am alive today because I had access to advances in care.

My experience with cancer began in 1978, when as a teenager, I was diagnosed with stage 3 Hodgkins Disease. At that time, there were limited treatment options. Everyone got the same standard care – surgery and lots of radiation. By the time I had a reoccurrence in 1980, the science had produced new chemo and a new treatment protocol that increased the survival rate of Hodgkin's patients to ninety three percent. I was so lucky to have access to that scientific advancement. The impact of that type of radiation left me with lots of issues, and later caused breast cancer in 1995. So, more surgery and more chemo. Again, science had advanced and I benefitted from better care.

Fast forward to 2023 and during a routine visit with my oncologist, it was discovered that I had developed Large Granular Lymphocytic Leukemia (LGL). It was a terrible shock. But I learned there are three kinds of LGL, two types that grow slowly and act like chronic diseases, and a third type that is aggressive and requires immediate care. Researchers don't yet know what causes LGL, but they know it is associated with a genetic change or mutation and the only way to determine what type you have and the best treatment option, is a biomarker test. Because LGL is a rare type of cancer, there is only one biomarker test available in the US. My provider told me that without the test, my only other option was to wait and see if the cancer became aggressive. I chose the test and was told that my insurer would likely deny it, as they did with all of the requests. My provider shared that she regularly appealed the denials, with little to no success but we would try.

My provider ordered the test, and as predicted, it was immediately denied by my insurance provider – again even though this test is the only way to really know whether I needed treatment or not. They said it was experimental and therefore not covered. I was fortunate that I could pay for it and had the test. Thankfully I learned that I had one of the two types of LGL that grows slowly and does not require any treatment at this time, and may never. It also revealed what type of treatment would be most effective, if I ever need it. How lucky am I that once again, access to advancements in care saved me. But imagine if you couldn't pay for a test like this, one that meant life or death, care or no care.

Thankfully, innovation is happening fast in health care, and while some things are in the experimental phase of development and deserve more scrutiny. and should require more steps to access that care, biomarker tests aren't in that category. These tests are the national recognized standard of care for many diseases – not just cancer.

That is why HB 24 should be acceptable to everyone. It takes a reasonable approach and focuses on those biomarker tests that are clinical valid and have met the standards of the U.S.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) or nationally recognized clinical practice guidelines. Other states have successfully taken this approach. This bill simply ensures coverage across private insurers and Medicaid for appropriate, nationally recognized biomarker testing for patients who need it.

Treatment is really hard. So, I was incredibly grateful not to have treatment when it wasn't indicated. Treatment is also really costly. And while this test saved me from pain and suffering and lost time from work and family life, it also saved my insurance provider thousands of dollars in expensive and unnecessary care.

I know how fortunate I have been. The advancements in science and technology have had tremendous impact on the diagnosis, treatment and outcomes for Ohioans battling cancer and other diseases and should be available to everyone, so all Ohioans have access to knowledge to make the best choices for their care, so please consider passing HB 24.

Thank you so much for allowing me to share this testimony. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions.

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