



May 31, 2024

Dear members of the Pennsylvania House Insurance Committee,

On behalf of the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) and the Pennsylvania Biomarker Testing Coalition, we write to request your strong support of biomarker testing legislation, House Bill 1754, sponsored by Representative Kyle Mullins and Minority Leader Bryan Cutler, when it comes before you in Committee on June 3, 2024. HB 1754 would improve Pennsylvanians' access to life-saving health care and is the result of bipartisan, bicameral sponsorship, with departmental review and input from stakeholders.

Biomarker testing helps develop a road map to the most effective forms of treatment for Pennsylvanians with cancer and other diseases, such as ALS, Alzheimer's, autoimmune diseases and arthritis, preeclampsia, Sickle Cell Disease, and organ and bone marrow transplants. Research shows, biomarker testing reduces patients' risk of death by matching them with the right treatment, at the right time.

As Dr. Jennifer Johnson, an oncologist from Jefferson Health's Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center, describes, "Biomarker testing opens the door to precision medicine by utilizing information from a patient's cancer cells to match them with targeted therapies, better understand their risk and prognosis, and more."

Targeted treatments for cancer and other diseases often require diagnostic testing, known as biomarker testing, to analyze a patient's biological samples (e.g., blood, tumor tissue). After identifying and evaluating these specific markers, health care providers are then able to better care for their patients and to choose the most effective treatment options for them. This improves patients' survival rates and quality of life and helps them avoid ineffective and sometimes costly courses of care that can cause adverse side effects. Biomarker testing is integral in identifying the likeliness of disease recurrence or progression, predicting a drug's efficacy or likelihood of toxicity, and identifying signs of disease recurrence before it is visible on imaging.

Consider, for example, Michael Hu's (Philadelphia, PA) experience: "Biomarker testing is a major part of why I'm here today. Thankfully, I was able to receive financial assistance for my biomarker testing. Without this assistance, I would not have been able to start my treatment off on the right foot or shift to a more appropriate medication to accommodate my disease progression." Michael shared, within 10 days of biomarker testing, he was able to start a medication that brought him relief. He said, "Not only did it alleviate my physical discomfort, but it gave me hope for the first time since my diagnosis."

Also, consider this perspective, from the ALS Association: "Ongoing research into ALS biomarkers has the potential to dramatically speed up the 10 to 24-month diagnostic process, which would not only make it possible for ALS patients to start life-extending treatments much sooner, but would also dramatically increase the pool of early-stage ALS patients available for clinical research."

Unfortunately, in Pennsylvania, insurance coverage for biomarker testing is inconsistent and failing to keep pace with advancements in treatment. According to a 2022 analysis, 32% of Pennsylvanians' insurance plans are more restrictive than the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) guidelines for biomarker testing for advanced breast, lung, melanoma, and prostate cancers. Yet, nine in ten providers rely on NCCN guidelines when recommending biomarker testing for cancer patients.

Furthermore, Pennsylvanians currently do not benefit equally from the latest advancements in biomarker testing and precision medicine. Rural Pennsylvanians, communities of color, individuals with lower socioeconomic status, and individuals receiving care in nonacademic medical centers are less likely to receive biomarker testing. These

gaps exacerbate existing health disparities and leave far too many Pennsylvanians behind, despite the progression of science and medical practice.

HB 1754 would address these gaps by establishing biomarker testing as a covered benefit in state-regulated insurance plans, including Medicaid, for the diagnosis, treatment, management, and monitoring of a patient's current disease or condition. Pennsylvania would become the 20th state in the nation to standardize biomarker testing as a covered benefit. With its passage, HB 1754 would align Pennsylvania with the latest science and medical practices, improving Pennsylvanians' odds while fighting diseases like cancer, ALS, Alzheimer's, Sickle Cell Disease, and more.

Thank you for your leadership and support. If you have questions or wish to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Donna Greco, MSW, PA Government Relations Director with the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network and the PA Biomarker Testing Coalition, at Donna.Greco@cancer.org or 717.319.8701.

Sincerely,

AiArthritis
Aim at Melanoma
AdvaMed
ALK Positive
ALS Association
Alzheimer's Association
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American Lung Association
American Kidney Fund
Arthritis Foundation
Autoimmune Association
Biomarker Collaborative
CancerCare
Cancer Support Community/Gilda's Club
CLL Society
Crohn's & Colitis Foundation
End Preeclampsia
Exon20 Group
Fight Colorectal Cancer
Global Colon Cancer Association
Go2 for Lung Cancer
ICAN - International Cancer Advocacy Network
KRAS Kickers
Lifesciences of Pennsylvania
Lung Cancer Research Foundation
LUNGevity Foundation
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
MET Crusaders

The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research
National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN)
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Donor Marrow Program/Be the Match
National Organization for Rare Disorders
Oncology Nursing Society
One Cancer Place
Patient Empowerment Network
Patients Rising
PDL1 Amplifieds
Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians
Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Pennsylvania Chapter of the American College of Physicians
Pennsylvania Medical Society
Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association
Pennsylvania Rheumatology Society
Sarsheret
Susan G. Komen
Triage Cancer
Touch4Life
VHL Alliance
Young Adult Survivors United