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Getting the Right Treatment, to the Right Patient, at the Right Time: Unlocking the Promise of Precision Medicine Through Biomarker Testing

Support HB 1779 as amended

Insurance coverage for biomarker testing is failing to keep pace with innovations and advancements in treatment. There is currently limited and disparate access to biomarker testing, which is key to connecting some patients with the most effective treatments. Improving access to biomarker testing - and thereby access to targeted therapies - is a strategy to reduce health disparities and improve outcomes for patients facing diseases like cancer. *HB 1779 will expand appropriate coverage of biomarker testing for state-regulated public and private insurance plans.*

What is Biomarker Testing?

- Progress in improving health outcomes increasingly involves the use of *precision medicine*, which uses information about a person's own genes or proteins to prevent, diagnose or treat diseases like cancer.
- A "*biomarker*" is a sign of disease or abnormal function that can be measured in blood, tissue or bodily fluid. In cancer care, biomarkers are often used to help determine the best treatment for a patient.
- *Biomarker testing* is the analysis of a patient's tissue, blood or fluid biospecimen for the presence of a biomarker. Biomarker testing includes single-analyte tests, multi-plex panel tests, and partial or whole genome sequencing.
- **Biomarker testing is an important step to accessing precision medicine which includes targeted therapies that can lead to improved survivorship and better quality of life for patients.**

Biomarker Testing and Health Equity:

- **Not all Illinois communities are benefitting from the latest advancements in biomarker testing and precision medicine.**
- Communities that have been marginalized including communities of color and individuals with lower socioeconomic status are less likely to receive biomarker testing.
- People in rural communities and those receiving care in nonacademic medical centers are also less likely to benefit from biomarker testing.
- **Ensuring equitable access to biomarker testing by improving coverage for and access to testing across insurance types is key to reducing health disparities.**
- We must work to dismantle barriers that prevent patients from benefiting from biomarker testing and precision medicine, and work to ensure all patients benefit, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status or zip code.

Biomarker Testing and Cost Savings:

- **Timely access to guideline-indicated comprehensive biomarker testing can help achieve the triple aim of health care including better health outcomes, improved quality of life and reduced costs.**
- When doctors connect patients to the most effective treatment for their cancer, patients can avoid treatments that will be ineffective or have more adverse effects.