



March 14, 2022

Ohio House of Representatives
 77 South High Street
 Columbus, OH 43215

Re: Support biomarker testing legislation—the key to unlocking precision treatments.

Dear Representative:

On behalf of all our organizations, we respectfully request that you support legislation to ensure that more Ohioans can benefit from biomarker testing—the key to unlocking targeted therapies. Specifically, we support legislative action to ensure Ohioans covered by state-regulated insurance plans, including Medicaid, have coverage for biomarker testing when medically appropriate.

Progress in improving cancer 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. Biomarker testing is an important step to accessing precision medicine which includes targeted therapies that can lead to improved survivorship, better quality of life, and reduce costs.

Biomarker testing is increasingly important for cancer care – and for the treatment of other diseases. Thirty-seven of the 62 oncology drugs launched in the past five years require or recommend biomarker testing prior to use.ⁱ Biomarker testing is increasingly important to enrolling patients in clinical trials as the number and percentage of cancer clinical trials that involve biomarkers has grown significantly.ⁱⁱ

Unfortunately, there is currently limited and disparate access to biomarker testing. A significant percentage of cancer patients and survivors do not receive biomarker testing because it is not covered by their insurer or the out-of-pocket costs would be too high. A recent study found that 78% of Ohioans are covered by plans that have more restrictive coverage than what is recommended by the National Comprehensive Cancer Network® (NCCN) guidelines for several common cancers.ⁱⁱⁱ

Not all 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.^{iv} People in rural communities and those receiving care in nonacademic medical centers are also less likely to have access to biomarker testing.^v ^{vi} Improving access to biomarker testing and thereby access to targeted therapies is also an important strategy to reduce health disparities and improve outcomes for cancer patients. Legislation to expand coverage of biomarker testing in Ohio would make it possible for more patients to get the right treatment at the right time. For these reasons we respectfully request that the members of the Ohio House of Representatives support biomarker testing legislation.

For more information or questions, please contact Leo Almeida at leo.almeida@cancer.org.

Sincerely,

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
Ohio Osteopathic Association
Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Ohio State Medical Association
Cleveland Clinic
The Academy of Medicine of Cleveland & Northern Ohio
Susan G. Komen
National Association for Rare Disorders
Ohio Hematology Oncology Society
Ohio Jewish Communities
Exon 20 Group
Little Hercules Foundation
Be the Match/ National Marrow Donor Program
Fight Colorectal Cancer
GO2 Foundation for Lung Cancer
ICAN, International Cancer Advocacy Network

KRAS Kickers
Triage Cancer
American Kidney Fund
American Association of Clinical Urologists, Inc.
BioOhio
National Psoriasis Foundation
Association for Clinical Oncology
American Lung Association in Ohio
Global Colon Cancer Association
American Heart Association
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
Community Oncology Alliance
American Urological Association
The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center
– James Cancer Hospital and Solove Research Institute

ⁱ Global Oncology Trends 2021. IQVIA Institute; June 2021.

ⁱⁱ The Evolution of Biomarker Use in Clinical Trials for Cancer Treatment, https://www.personalizedmedicinecoalition.org/Userfiles/PMC-Corporate/file/The_Evolution_of_Biomarker_Use_in_Clinical_Trials_for_Cancer_Treatments.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ Wong WB, Anina D, Lin CW, Adams DV. Alignment of health plan coverage policies for somatic multigene panel testing with clinical guidelines in select solid tumors. *Per Med.* 2022;10.2217/pme-2021-0174. (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/35118882>)

^{iv} Presley, C., Soulos, P., Chiang, A., Longtine, J., Adelson, K., Herbst, R., Nussbaum, N., Sorg, R., Abernethy, A., Agarwala, V., & Gross, C. (2017). Disparities in next generation sequencing in a population-based community cohort of patients with advanced non-small cell lung cancer. *Journal of Clinical Oncology.* 35. 6563-6563. 10.1200/JCO.2017.35.15_suppl.6563.

^v Kim, E. S., Roy, U. B., Ersek, J. L., King, J., Smith, R. A., Martin, N., Martins, R., Moore, A., Silvestri, G. A., & Jett, J. (2019). Updates Regarding Biomarker Testing for Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer: Considerations from the National Lung Cancer Roundtable. *Journal of thoracic oncology: official publication of the International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer,* 14(3), 338–342. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jtho.2019.01.002>

^{vi} F. R., Kerr, K. M., Bunn, P. A., Jr, Kim, E. S., Obasaju, C., Pérol, M., Bonomi, P., Bradley, J. D., Gandara, D., Jett, J. R., Langer, C. J., Natale, R. B., Novello, S., Paz-Ares, L., Ramalingam, S. S., Reck, M., Reynolds, C. H., Smit, E. F., Socinski, M. A., Spigel, D. R., ... Thatcher, N. (2018). Molecular and Immune Biomarker Testing in Squamous-Cell Lung Cancer: Effect of Current and Future Therapies and Technologies. *Clinical lung cancer,* 19(4), 331–339. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clc.2018.03.014>