



March 20, 2023

The Honorable Colleen Burton  
Chair  
Senate Committee on Health Policy  
404 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

The Honorable Charles Wesley Clemons, Sr.  
Chair  
House Healthcare Regulation Subcommittee  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

**Re: Support for Senate Bill 1218 / House Bill 805 – Biomarker Testing**

Dear Chair Burton and Chair Clemons,

The National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD) is the leading independent advocacy organization representing the millions of Americans affected by rare diseases. At NORD, we believe that all patients should have access to quality, accessible, innovative, and affordable health coverage that is best suited to their medical needs. On behalf of Floridians living with rare disorders, NORD is proud to support SB 1218/House Bill 805, legislation that would expand patient access to biomarker testing.

Biomarkers are characteristics, such as radiographic abnormalities or biological molecules found in blood, tissue, or other bodily fluid that can be objectively measured to determine the sign of a condition or disease. The result of a biomarker test can be used to assess how well a patient responds to a treatment for a disease or condition, as well as determine the best course of action for a patient.<sup>i</sup> This can significantly improve patient outcomes; for instance, in rare cancers, including pediatric cancers, this can mean that treatments can be targeted specifically for the genetic or molecular makeup of the tumor.<sup>ii</sup> Biomarker testing allows for targeted care and precision medicine, often decreasing the treatment time and increasing the likelihood of survivorship for patients.<sup>iii</sup> While currently biomarker testing is often used in oncology, biomarker testing can benefit patients in many disease groups, including autoimmune diseases, and research is underway that may unlock benefits in many other rare conditions.

Unfortunately, patient access to biomarker testing is often delayed or denied by state Medicaid programs or private health insurance plans. SB 1218/HB 805 would require coverage for biomarker testing if the use of the test is supported by medical and scientific evidence. Furthermore, it would establish clear parameters and processes for utilization review, including prior authorization, to ensure limited disruptions in care for patients.

We urge you to support this legislation to ensure all patients can benefit from this quickly evolving aspect of precision medicine by adding SB 1218 and HB 805 to the agenda for your next Committee meeting. Thank you for your attention to this matter. For any questions, please contact me at [areed@rarediseases.org](mailto:areed@rarediseases.org).



Sincerely,

*Annissa Reed*

Annissa Reed  
Associate Director, State Policy  
National Organization for Rare Disorders

CC: Members of the Senate Committee on Health Policy

<sup>1</sup> Biomarkers. ONS. (n.d.). Retrieved December 7, 2022, from <https://www.ons.org/genomics-taxonomy/biomarkers>

<sup>1</sup> Biomarker testing for cancer treatment. National Cancer Institute. (n.d.). Retrieved December 7, 2022, from <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/types/biomarker-testing-cancer-treatment#:~:text=Biomarker%20testing%20is%20a%20way,how%20certain%20cancer%20treatments%20work>.

<sup>1</sup> Biomarker testing for cancer treatment. National Cancer Institute. (n.d.). Retrieved December 7, 2022, from <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/types/biomarker-testing-cancer-treatment#:~:text=Biomarker%20testing%20is%20a%20way,how%20certain%20cancer%20treatments%20work>.