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HB 1217 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance – Required Coverage for Biomarker Testing

Position: *Support*

House Health and Government Operations Committee

March 9, 2023

Bill Summary

This bill will require the Maryland Medical Assistance Program and other insurers, nonprofit health service plans, health maintenance organizations, and managed care organizations to provide coverage for biomarker testing that is supported by medical and scientific evidence.

Rationale

MedStar Health is the largest healthcare provider in Maryland and the Washington, D.C., region. MedStar Health's more than 300 care locations include 10 hospitals, 33 urgent care clinics, ambulatory care centers, and primary and specialty care providers. We are also home to the MedStar Health Research Institute and a comprehensive scope of health-related organizations all recognized regionally and nationally for excellence. MedStar Health has one of the largest graduate medical education programs in the country, training 1,150 medical residents annually, and is the medical education and clinical partner of Georgetown University. MedStar Health's team of more than 32,000 includes physicians, nurses, and many other clinical and non-clinical associates who together support MedStar Health's patient-first philosophy that combines care, compassion, and clinical excellence with an emphasis on customer service.

Biomarker testing is a type of precision medicine that looks for genes, proteins, and other substances that can provide information about a patient's cancer or chronic condition. The results can help physicians choose the most effective, lifesaving treatment for an individual patient. Biomarker testing is essential to high-quality, personalized care and can be a real game-changer for treating serious illnesses, but unfortunately, patients cannot easily access it.

Insurance coverage has not kept pace with the speed of medical innovation, creating significant barriers to care for vulnerable patients. This bill will increase access to this lifesaving diagnostic tool by ensuring state-regulated health insurance, including Medicaid, will cover this critically important testing.

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It's time for Maryland to join Arizona, California, Illinois, Louisiana, and Rhode Island which have already passed laws to increase access to comprehensive biomarker testing. At this moment, legislation is moving forward in Kentucky and Oklahoma.

We support HB 1217 because expanding access to biomarker testing will ensure Marylanders get the right treatment at the right time. This will create significant savings in the healthcare system and will ultimately save lives.

For the reasons stated above, we ask that you give HB 1217 a **favorable** report.