



DATE: March 9, 2023 **COMMITTEE:** House Health and Government Operations
BILL NO: House Bill 1217
BILL TITLE: Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Required Coverage for Biomarker Testing
POSITION: Support

Kennedy Krieger Institute supports House Bill 1217 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Required Coverage for Biomarker Testing.

Bill Summary:

House Bill 1217 requires Maryland Medicaid and private payors to provide coverage for biomarker testing.

Background:

Kennedy Krieger Institute is an internationally recognized institution dedicated to improving the lives of children and adults with developmental disabilities and disorders of the brain, spinal cord and musculoskeletal system. The Institute serves over 27,000 patients per year, a significant portion of whom have a genetic basis for their disability. Kennedy Krieger currently employs seven certified genetic counselors, two board-certified medical geneticists, and numerous other physician specialists who utilize genetic testing in their care of their patients.

Rationale:

Under the legislation, the definition of “biomarker testing” includes genetic tests. The rapid growth of medical genetics has affected virtually all areas of medicine. Over the past decade, advances in genomic technology and research have elucidated the genetic basis of a vast array of health conditions including neurodevelopmental disorders. Research has also identified promising pathways to targeted therapeutics. Identifying the genetic etiology of a patient’s medical or neurodevelopmental disorder has an array of benefits and can lead to improved outcomes. Results of genetic testing frequently impacts medical management, prognostication, treatment, and family counseling.

Unfortunately, the current Medicaid coverage of genetic testing is variable, where some tests are covered while others are not. Opening reimbursement for biomarker testing will enable broader access to medically necessary genetic testing for individuals with Medicaid. Many Medicaid recipients, especially children with disabilities, have an underlying genetic disorder as the cause of their health or developmental problem. Identifying the genetic diagnosis (via biomarker testing) can lead to improved outcomes and access to disease modifying treatments.

Kennedy Krieger Institute requests a favorable report on House Bill 1217.