



American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
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Thank you, madam chair and members of the committee, for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 1217. My name is Devon Adams and I am the Senior Analyst, Policy and Legislative Support, for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN). This year it is estimated that over 35,000 Marylanders will hear the words 'you have cancer' and over 11,000 will die of the disease. 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 involves analyzing a tumor or in some cases a blood sample to identify gene alterations or expression of proteins that may impact treatment decisions. Timely access to guideline-indicated comprehensive biomarker testing is key to accessing precision medicine including targeted and immunotherapies that can lead to improved survivorship, better quality of life, and reduced costs as some unnecessary or ineffective treatments can be avoided with information from biomarker testing.

Unfortunately, there is disparate access to biomarker testing in Maryland. For example, according to one study, 73% of Marylanders with commercial health plan coverage are in plans considered more restrictive than the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) guidelines for multigene panel tests which may save time, money, and tissue. In addition, some communities such as those with lower socioeconomic status are less likely to receive biomarker testing in the current environment. In a 2021 survey of over 300 oncology providers, 66% reported that insurance coverage for biomarker testing was a significant or moderate barrier to appropriate biomarker testing.

It's important to underscore that biomarker testing is not indicated or appropriate for all cancer patients. We are not advocating for coverage of every existing biomarker test; rather, this legislation is tied to rigorous sources of medical and scientific evidence, such as clinical practice guidelines, that guide who should receive this testing.

Improving access to biomarker testing that leads to increased access to targeted therapies can reduce health disparities and allow more communities to benefit from the latest advancements in precision medicine.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to speak to you today. We urge your support of House Bill 1217 to make it possible for more patients to get the right treatment at the right time.