

March 9, 2023

SB0805
Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance
Required Coverage for Biomarker Testing

FAV

Elizabeth Hastings
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Dear Chair and Committee Members

I am writing in support of this bill because it is vital to the treatment of cancer and many other illnesses. I was diagnosed with non-small lung cancer in 2016. A few months later metastasis was found in my spine. My oncologist ordered that my tumor be tested for biomarkers, and the test revealed that I had a mutation for which there is targeted therapy. The cancer has progressed twice since then, and each time biomarker tests revealed a new mutation for which there was another targeted therapy and I'm now in a clinical trial for a new targeted therapy drug.

The disease is terminal, but biomarker testing as well as lung cancer research have given me years of life I would not have had otherwise. Unfortunately, the test is expensive and insurance companies are reluctant to cover it. On my first test, our insurance company denied coverage because the test was experimental even though it is widely used in medical treatment. After we and my oncologist appealed, the coverage was granted. This is not often the case for many other patients, who face coverage obstacles.

I urge you to support this legislation so that all Maryland citizens will have access to this vital tool in medical treatment.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Hastings