

Senate Bill 608 Maryland Medical Assistance Plan and Health Insurance -
Pharmacogenomic Testing - Required Coverage

Finance Committee March 4, 2026

Position: Favorable

Good afternoon. My name is Paul Sheives, Vice President of Government Affairs for Myriad Genetics, one of the oldest personalized medicine laboratories in the country. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in support of Senate Bill 608, legislation that will ensure equitable access to critical pharmacogenomic mental health testing services for Maryland patients.

Today, Maryland is grappling with rising levels of mental illness, worsened by a shortage of mental health providers and facilities, particularly in rural and underserved communities. Mental healthcare providers urgently need tools and solutions to address this growing crisis and assist their patients in recovery. Medication is the most common form of treatment of depression, yet only a little more than 1/3 of patients reach remission on their first medication. Pharmacogenomic tests, which only need to be administered once in a patient's lifetime, evaluate genetic variants that affect how a drug is metabolized. Patients that hyper-metabolize the drug will never have enough in their system to reach efficacy without a dosage adjustment; conversely, patients that hypo-metabolize the drug experience adverse events.

Myriad's GeneSight test has been the subject of numerous clinical studies that demonstrate clinical efficacy and cost avoidance through use of the test. A recently published meta-analysis of Level 1 data on GeneSight demonstrates a 41% increase in pooled remission rates in patients with depression compared to treatment as usual.ⁱ A nearly 2000-patient independent study in the VA showed that use of the test increased the likelihood of remission in major depressive disorder and decreased the time to remission.ⁱⁱ Published studies demonstrate that total cost of care for patients that use GeneSight compared to treatment-as-usual save \$3400 annually.ⁱⁱⁱ This is achieved by getting patients to the right drug faster thereby decreasing polypharmacy costs, inpatient hospitalizations and emergency room visits.^{iv}

Swift stabilization of psychiatric patients by avoiding prolonged medication trials can prevent psychiatric-related hospitalizations, unnecessary trips to state detention facilities, and allow patients to return to their lives and work sooner. When mental health is managed effectively, overall healthcare management improves. For example, controlling severe depression enhances the management of comorbid conditions like diabetes or heart disease.

Pharmacogenomic mental health tests have already been covered by the federal Medicare Program for over a decade, as well as by many State Medicaid programs and some large commercial insurance carriers. This bill does not require regulated insurers to cover all pharmacogenomic tests for mental health – it closes the gap for coverage that already exists for those tests that have met the high bar of achieving Medicare coverage. For these reasons, I urge members of this committee to safeguard patient access to pharmacogenomic testing for patients in Maryland by supporting the passage of Senate Bill 608.

Thank you,

Paul Sheives, JD, MS

ⁱ Albers R, et al. Meta-analysis of Response and Remission Outcomes With a Weighted Multigene Pharmacogenomic Test for Adults With Depression. *J Clin Psychopharmacol*. 2025 Nov-Dec;45(6):570-579.

ⁱⁱ Oslin DW, et al. Effect of Pharmacogenomic Testing for Drug-Gene Interactions on Medication Selection and Remission of Symptoms in Major Depressive Disorder: The PRIME Care Randomized Clinical Trial. *JAMA*. 2022 Jul 12;328(2):151-161.

ⁱⁱⁱ Del Tredici et al. Real-World Impact of Pharmacogenomic Testing on Medication Use and Healthcare Resource Utilization in Patients with Major Depressive Disorder. *J Clin Psychopharmacol*. 2025 Jul-Aug;45(4):320-328.

^{iv} Benitez J, et al. Use of combinatorial pharmacogenomic guidance in treating psychiatric disorders. *Per Med*. 2018 Nov;15(6):481-494.