



February 6, 2024

The Honorable Brian Lohse
Chair, House Commerce Subcommittee
Iowa State Capitol
1007 E. Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50319

The Honorable David Young
Vice Chair, House Commerce Subcommittee
Iowa State Capitol
1007 E. Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50319

The Honorable Megan Srinivas
Ranking Member, House Commerce Subcommittee
Iowa State Capitol
1007 E. Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50319

Re: Support for HF 2157, AN ACT Relating to Insurance Coverage for Biomarker Testing

Dear Subcommittee Members:

On behalf of The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research (MJFF), I write in support of **HF 2157**, which will require health care plans, including Medicaid, to provide coverage for biomarker testing.

Founded in 2000, MJFF has been singularly dedicated to finding a cure for Parkinson's disease through an aggressively funded research agenda and to ensuring the development of improved therapies for those living with Parkinson's today. To date, MJFF has funded nearly \$2 billion in global Parkinson's research.

Biomarker testing is a crucial step for accessing precision medicine, including targeted therapies that can lead to improved survivorship and better quality of life for patients. While most current applications of biomarker testing are in oncology and autoimmune diseases, there is research underway to benefit patients in other areas, including neurological conditions such as Parkinson's disease.

This past April, MJFF announced that through the ongoing work of our landmark clinical study, Parkinson's Progression Markers Initiative (PPMI), a new biomarker had been identified for Parkinson's disease. This breakthrough was published in the scientific journal *The Lancet Neurology* and opens a new chapter for research, with the promise of a future where every person living with Parkinson's can expect improved care and treatments — and newly diagnosed individuals may never advance to full-blown symptoms.¹

¹ "Breaking News: Parkinson's Disease Biomarker Found." The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research | Parkinson's Disease, 13 Apr. 2023, <https://www.michaeljfox.org/news/breaking-news-parkinsons-disease-biomarker-found>.

There are an estimated more than one million Americans currently living with Parkinson's disease, with about 90,000 more diagnosed each year.² According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Parkinson's disease is the second most common and the fastest-growing neurological disorder worldwide.

MJFF recognizes the potential that biomarking testing possesses to revolutionize the way that people living with Parkinson's disease are diagnosed and treated. There is additional work to be done to make this newly discovered biomarker available to the public and ensure that it is covered by health care plans. It is critical to ensure that people living with Parkinson's will be able to access a biomarker test as an important tool in their health care as they become more widely available.

To ensure that this legislation covers all proven and necessary testing, I urge this subcommittee to utilize the language in SF 2159. This is the opportunity to guarantee that the most patients possible can benefit from this advanced, critical healthcare tool.

For these reasons, MJFF strongly supports **HF 2157**. I urge this subcommittee to support this important piece of legislation and look forward to seeing it move forward. If you have any questions, you may contact me at zhardy@michaeljfox.org or 202-638-4101, ext. 225.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Z Hardy', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Zach Hardy
State Government Relations Officer

² "New Study Shows the Incidence of Parkinson's in the U.S. Is Nearly 50 Percent Higher than Previous Estimates." The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research | Parkinson's Disease, 15 Dec. 2022, <https://www.michaeljfox.org/news/new-study-shows-incidence-parkinsons-us-nearly-50-percent-higher-previous-estimates>.