



February 5, 2024

Chair Lohse, Vice Chair Young, and Ranking Member Srinivas:

On behalf of the patients, family members, donors, volunteers, and staff at NMDP thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of H.F. 2157, which would help more Iowans access biomarker testing so that they can get the right treatment at the right time.

As a global nonprofit leader in cell therapy, NMDPSM creates essential connections between researchers and supporters to inspire action and accelerate innovation to find life-saving cures for blood cancers and disorders. Entrusted by Congress to operate the national registry of the world's most diverse donors and with an extensive network of transplant partners, physicians, and caregivers, NMDP is expanding access to treatment so that every patient can receive their life-saving cell therapy. Biomarker testing is one tool physicians can use to determine the best treatment for their patients.

Biomarker testing is the analysis of a patient's tissue, blood, or other biospecimen for the presence of a biomarker which helps doctors certify that they are getting patients the most effective treatment for their diagnosis—but not everyone is benefiting from the latest advancements in cancer treatment, due in part to lack of insurance coverage. H.F. 2157 helps ensure that all Iowans have access to the benefits of biomarker testing.

While most cell therapies NMDP facilitates are to treat cancer, transplant is also a treatment for non-malignant chronic diseases such as Sickle Cell Disease (SCD). Some SCD patients must receive biomarker testing to determine suitability and eligibility for clinical trials. If a patient's insurance does not cover biomarker testing, the cost may preclude them from accessing their needed therapies.

Biomarker testing is also used to identify the best treatment for Graft versus Host Disease (GvHD), a potential side effect of any bone marrow transplant that is also considered a chronic disease. This condition occurs when the donor immune cells attack the patient's healthy cells and tissue. Biomarker tests can be used to determine the extent and severity of GvHD, which allows physicians to choose a treatment that balances effectiveness and side effects, resulting in the best outcomes for the patients.

H.F. 2157 aligns coverage of biomarker testing with the latest science, providing a gateway to targeted therapies that can lead to better health outcomes and improved quality of life. Greater access to biomarker testing can allow Iowans to bypass costly and ineffective treatments by connecting patients with therapies that will be most effective for their individual cancer right away. Please support H.F. 2157 to increase access to biomarker testing for all Iowans facing cancers and consider expanding this bill to cover non-cancerous conditions like SCD and graft-vs-host disease. Thank you for your consideration.

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