# Comment Report

SSB 3001
A bill for an act relating to insurance coverage for biomarker testing.(See SF 2159.)

Subcommittee Members: Brown-CH, Koelker, Petersen

Date: 01/17/2024
Time: 01:00 PM
Location: Room 315

**Name:**          Margaret Uhler

**Comment:**      Attached are comments in support of SSB 3001.




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January 16, 2024

The Honorable Waylon Brown
Chair, Senate Commerce Subcommittee
Iowa State Capitol
1007 E. Grand Ave
Des Moines, IA 50319

The Honorable Carrie Koelker
Vice Chair, Senate Commerce Subcommittee
Iowa State Capitol
1007 E. Grand Ave
Des Moines, IA 50319

The Honorable Janet Petersen
Ranking Member, Senate Commerce Subcommittee
Iowa State Capitol
1007 E. Grand Ave
Des Moines, IA 50319

**RE: SUPPORT FOR SSB 3001 Biomarker Testing**

Dear Subcommittee Members:

On behalf of the Alliance for Patient Access (AfPA), I am writing to urge your support for SSB 3001, which would expand and simplify health insurance coverage for biomarker testing. This bill requires coverage for biomarker testing for the purposes of diagnosis, treatment, prognosis, management and ongoing monitoring of a patient's disease.

Founded in 2006, AfPA is a national network of policy-minded health care providers who advocate for patient-centered care. AfPA supports health policies that reinforce clinical decision-making, promote personalized care and protect the provider-patient relationship. Motivated by these principles, AfPA members participate in clinician working groups, advocacy initiatives, stakeholder coalitions and the creation of educational materials. AfPA also convenes an Iowa State Chapter, a group of Iowa health care providers that advocate for policies prioritizing patient-centered care.

Health care is rapidly moving towards an advanced, precision-based approach. For example, with the advancements of precision medicine in oncology care, doctors can offer cancer patients targeted treatments based on the molecular understanding of their disease, allowing for more personalized, patient-centered care.  This can lead to more effective treatment, with fewer side effects – and has been proven to improve patient outcomes for some types of cancer.[1]

This type of individualized treatment is possible by knowing the specific actionable genomic alterations in the patient, which can only be detected through biomarker testing. Advances in precision medicine are being seen in a number of disease states including rheumatology, neurology and mental health.

Biomarker testing can reduce the number of time-consuming and costly tests used to determine a patient's diagnosis, as a biomarker analysis will provide insight as to whether a targeted or specific treatment might work for a specific patient. This could be lifesaving for many patients. However, without insurance coverage of biomarker testing, patients cannot benefit from this kind of individualized treatment.

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[1] https://ascopubs.org/doi/full/10.1200/jop.2016.011486?cookieSet=1

Unfortunately, patients in Iowa face coverage barriers for both biomarker testing and individualized treatments from insurance companies. This can cause delays in care that can be devastating for patients with diseases like advanced cancer. SSB 3001 will ensure that patients will have equal access, regardless of their disease stage, to biomarker testing by requiring appropriate coverage. Promoting early detection and faster diagnosis, when possible, can lead to life-saving precision treatment.

SSB 3001 supports the clinician-patient relationship by allowing clinicians to access appropriate medical tools for their patients and helping ensure patients can access testing to help drive accurate diagnosis and effective treatment decisions. We are pleased that the state legislature has prioritized this crucial issue. On behalf of the Alliance for Patient Access, I urge your support of SSB 3001 to ensure patients can access the tests and treatments they need. Should you have any questions, please reach out to Casey McPherson at cmcpherson@allianceforpatientaccess.org.

Sincerely,

Josie Cooper
Executive Director
Alliance for Patient Access