

Comment Report

HF 2492

A bill for an act relating to insurance coverage for biomarker testing.(Formerly HF 2157; See HF 2668.)

Subcommittee Members: Lohse-CH, Ehlert, Fry

Date: 03/12/2024

Time: 12:00 PM

Location: House Lounge

Name: Casey McPherson

Comment: On behalf of the Alliance for Patient Access, submitting a letter of comment on HF 2492. Thank you



**Alliance for
Patient Access**

March 11, 2024

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

The Honorable Joel Fry
House Appropriations Subcommittee
Iowa State Capitol
1007 E. Grand Ave
Des Moines, IA 50319

The Honorable Tracy Ehlert
House Appropriations Subcommittee
Iowa State Capitol
1007 E. Grand Ave
Des Moines, IA 50319

RE: SUPPORT FOR HF 2492 - Biomarker Testing

Dear Subcommittee Members:

On behalf of the Alliance for Patient Access (AfPA), I am writing to urge your support, with amendment, for HF 2492, 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. However, this bill should be amended to include disease agnostic language that will cover testing for patients across disease states.

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 genomic alterations in the patient, which can only be detected through biomarker testing. Advances in precision medicine are also being seen in a number of disease states including rheumatology, neurology and mental health. For example, a recent study highlighted that a simple blood biomarker test was found to be up to 96% accurate in identifying the most important biomarker in Alzheimer's disease pathology.² Similarly in rheumatology, biomarkers reveal whether

¹ <https://ascopubs.org/doi/full/10.1200/jop.2016.011486?cookieSet=1>

² doi:10.1001/jamaneurol.2023.5319

specific medications, such as TNF inhibitors, would be ineffective for patients who have been diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis.³

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 countless patients. However, **without insurance coverage of biomarker testing, patients would face delays in identifying the best treatment options and risk experiencing significantly worse disease outcomes.**

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 but also other diseases. HF 2492 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.

HF 2492 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 HF 2492, to ensure patients across disease states can access the tests and treatments they need. Should you have any questions, please reach out to Casey McPherson at cmcpherson@allianceforpatientaccess.org.

Sincerely,

Sakeer Hussain, MD
Heartland Oncology and Hematology
Council Bluffs, IA

Spas Kotev, MD
Mercy Iowa City
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Lynn Rankin, MD
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Cedar Rapids, IA

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Broadlawns Medical Center
Des Moines, IA

³ <https://www.hcplive.com/view/wesley-mizutani-md-sb-496-expands-insurance-coverage-for-biomarkers>