



The Maryland State Medical Society
63711 Cathedral Street
Baltimore, MD 263701-5516
410.539.0872
Fax: 410.547.0915
1.800.492.1056
www.medchi.org

TO: The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Ariana B. Kelly

FROM: Danna L. Kauffman
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
Andrew G. Vetter
Christine K. Krone
410-244-7000

DATE: March 9, 2023

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 1217 – *Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance – Required Coverage for Biomarker Testing*

On behalf of the Maryland State Medical Society and the Maryland/District of Columbia Society of Clinical Oncology, we submit this letter of **support** House Bill 1217. House Bill 1217 requires the Medicaid program and commercial carriers to provide coverage for biomarker testing for the purpose of diagnosis, treatment, appropriate management, or ongoing monitoring of a disease or condition that is supported by medical and scientific evidence. The testing remains subject to cost-sharing and utilization review.

Cancer biomarkers are genes, proteins, or other substances that can be tested to reveal important details about a patient's cancer. For many patients with cancer, biomarker testing can provide useful and necessary information, such as showing whether the cancer is likely to grow and spread and what treatment options may be the most beneficial. Not all cancer cells are alike, and patients react differently even with the same type of cancer. These differences might also affect how well the cancer responds to certain types of treatment, which work best when the cancer cells have certain features that make them different from normal cells. Some of these differences can be tested for as biomarkers. The differences in the features of cancer cells are the basis for how targeted drugs work. Biomarker testing before treatment can help show if these drugs are likely (or unlikely) to be helpful.

We caution that in mandating biomarker testing, we ensure that access to it is not negatively affected by cost-sharing requirements that place it out of reach or prior authorization requirements that reduce the availability of testing or denial testing. With that said, we request a favorable vote on House Bill 1217.