

February 15, 2023



Dear Health Services Committee Member,

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network writes to you today in strong support of House Bill 180. We ask you and the members of your committee to pass this critical legislation that will improve patient access to care. Timely access to guideline-indicated comprehensive biomarker testing will enable more patients to access the most effective treatments for their disease and can potentially help achieve the triple aim of health care: better health outcomes, improved quality of life, and reduced costs.

This legislation will ensure Kentuckians covered by state governed commercial insurance and Medicaid have coverage for biomarker testing when medically appropriate. Progress in improving cancer outcomes increasingly involves the use of precision medicine, which uses information about a person's own genes or proteins to prevent, diagnose or treat diseases like cancer. Biomarker testing analyzes tissue, blood, or other biospecimen to identify mutations that may impact treatment decisions. This testing is an important step to accessing precision medicine which includes targeted therapies that can lead to improved survivorship and better quality of life for cancer patients. There is currently limited and disparate access to biomarker testing. According to a recent ACS CAN Survivor Views survey of cancer patients and survivors, 29% of patients who discussed the need for biomarker testing with their doctor did not receive this testing because it was not covered by their insurer or the out of pocket costs would be too high.

Improving access to biomarker testing and thereby access to targeted therapies is a strategy to reduce health disparities and improve outcomes for all cancer patients. However, communities of color and individuals with lower socioeconomic status are less likely to receive biomarker testing. People in rural communities and those receiving care in nonacademic medical centers are also less likely to benefit from biomarker testing. One jarring example of the current disparities in access to biomarker testing: a recent study showing patients with Medicaid diagnosed with advanced non-small cell lung cancer are not only at a 19% higher risk of not receiving biomarker testing and a 30% higher risk of not benefiting from precision medicine; they also have a 23% higher risk of mortality when compared to commercially insured patients. Ensuring equitable access to biomarker testing by improving coverage for and access to testing across insurance types is key to reducing health disparities.

House Bill 180 would make it possible for more patients to get the right treatment at the right time!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doug Hogan".

Kentucky Government Relations Director, ACS CAN