



**Alliance for
Patient Access**

March 14, 2023

The Honorable Zach Stephenson
Chair, Commerce Finance and Policy Committee
449 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Carlie Kotyza-Witthuhn
Vice Chair, Commerce Finance and Policy Committee
567 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Tim O'Driscoll
Republican Lead, Commerce Finance and Policy Committee
237 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: SUPPORT FOR HF 1978 – Biomarker Testing

Dear Representative Stephenson, Representative Kotyza-Witthuhn and Representative O'Driscoll:

On behalf of the Alliance for Patient Access (AfPA), I urge you to support HF 1978, which would expand and simplify health insurance coverage for patient 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.

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 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 specialties 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.**

Unfortunately, patients in Minnesota 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. HF 1978 will ensure that patients will have equal access, regardless of their

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

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 1978 supports the clinician-patient relationship by allowing clinicians to access appropriate medical tools for their patients and helps ensure patients can access testing to help drive accurate diagnosis and effective treatment decisions. On behalf of the Alliance for Patient Access, I urge your support for HF 1978 to ensure patients can access the tests and treatments they need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Josie Cooper".

Josie Cooper
Executive Director
Alliance for Patient Access

CC: Rep. Bierman
Rep. Cha
Rep. Daudt
Rep. Dotseth
Rep. Freiberg
Rep. Klevorn
Rep. Koegel
Rep. Kraft
Rep. Liebling
Rep. Neu Brindley
Rep. Niska
Rep. Perryman
Rep. Pfarr
Rep. Tabke
Rep. Olson