

RE: NY S 1196/A 1673

May 17, 2023

I am writing on behalf of *CancerCare* to ask for your support of NY S 1196/A 1673. *CancerCare* is the leading national organization providing free, professional support services and information to help people manage the emotional, practical, and financial challenges of cancer. In 2022, our staff answered more than 38,000 calls to our helpline and served clients with 90 different types of cancer, from all 50 states. We are informed by the stories we hear from our clients as they navigate the confusing, expensive, and frustrating process of accessing and paying for vital – and sometimes life-saving – cancer care and treatment.

Biomarker testing is a necessary tool in the advancing world of precision cancer treatment. Biomarker testing has proven to be extremely valuable in identifying the most effective therapy for eligible cancer patients because it helps them receive the right treatments at the right time while also saving money and leading to better outcomes. In a recently released *CancerCare* survey of 295 people diagnosed with cancer from 2019-2022, biomarker testing helped doctors tailor therapy for nearly all respondent patients (93%) whose cancers were tested over the past three years. Two in 10 cancer patients (20%) surveyed were able to avoid unnecessary chemotherapy and/or radiation and 10% became eligible for a clinical trial.

Unfortunately, health insurance plans often limit cancer patients' access to recommended biomarker testing, impose burdensome prior authorization protocols, or require unaffordable cost-sharing, which can prevent or delay cancer patients' access to optimal treatments. For example, three out of 10 respondents (29%) in *CancerCare*'s survey who received biomarker testing did not have the test covered by their insurance.

Biomarker testing is increasingly a health care equity issue. Research published by the American Society of Clinical Oncology shows significant gaps in the rate of biomarker testing between Black and white lung and colorectal cancer patients, which can lead to disparities in clinical trial participation and hinder access to the most effective treatments. A key way to address these barriers is to broaden insurance coverage of biomarker testing, as recommended by medical experts.

On behalf of *CancerCare*, I urge you to support NY S 1196/A 1673 to help ensure patients have access to and benefit from biomarker testing.

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