



May 31, 2022

The Honorable P. Scott Lipps  
Chairman, House Health Committee  
Ohio House of Representatives  
77 S. High Street, Columbus, OH 43215

**RE: House Bill 608 – Written Proponent Testimony**

Dear Chairman Lipps,

I am Eddie Pauline, President and CEO of BioOhio, Ohio's only statewide bioscience industry organization. We represent nearly 300 member organizations and a broader bioscience ecosystem comprised of thousands of business leaders and employees across our state.

I am here today on behalf of all of them in support of H.B. 608, which would require health plan and Medicaid coverage of biomarker testing.

H.B. 608 will not only save Ohioans' lives by creating a pathway for targeted, precision treatment, we believe the more accurate diagnoses and treatment would lead to reduced costs for patients and the health care system overall.

I say this because research shows that biomarkers may permit optimizing treatment regimens without compromising health outcomes. This has significant implications for healthcare payers in containing expenditures that provide no or minimal benefits to patients. In other words, biomarkers move us towards more efficient health care.

Biomarkers give healthcare providers essential information about a person's genetics, pathogenic processes and likely responses to specific treatments. Without that testing, providers are often shooting in the dark, trying more treatments and therapies that are less effective for an individual and running up healthcare costs. By requiring insurance coverage for biomarker testing, providers will more quickly be able to identify the right treatment for each patient, saving additional tests, time and money.

For example, CVS Health researchers [released an analysis](#) on the cost difference between offering cancer patients broad-panel and narrow-panel sequencing.

The study identified 45 lung cancer patients who were given broad-panel sequencing and 399 who underwent narrow-panel sequencing. They found that while broad-panel costs more upfront, total costs for cancer care were lower as the genomic testing allowed for more targeted interventions.

Average costs for broad-panel sequencing were \$1,977, while narrow-panel sequencing costs, on average, were \$819.

However, on average, the six-month per member per month costs for those who underwent broad-panel sequencing was \$11,535 compared to \$20,039 for those who were given the narrow-panel screening.

That savings of \$8,504 is statistically significant, the researchers said.

H.B. 608 will also help Ohio's economy. Ohio is quickly becoming a hub for bioscience. Driven in part by the fact our state hosts 15 percent of the country's active clinical trials, ranking 7th among all states and 1st in the Midwest.

There are currently 5,400 clinical trials underway or recruiting this year in Ohio. Clinical trials play a critical role in getting more innovative treatments to market, and biomarkers can provide researchers with evidence about the safety and efficacy of such treatments while more data is collected. They can also help patients understand if they are eligible for a clinical trial.

Ohio can send a message that it supports life science innovation by enacting HB 608. We will join states like Arizona, California, Illinois, and Louisiana, which have already moved forward to support biomarkers.

We are tied for fourth among states in the number of gene therapy startups and companies. But those businesses do not flourish without the right ecosystem around them, and legislation like H.B. 608 is a crucial part of that.

Our bioscience industry is strong and growing, as many of you already know. The biosciences employ some 83,000 Ohioans at companies ranging from the large and well-known to startups. That employment has increased 15 percent in the last five years, with an average wage of \$84,600. That salary is more than \$30,000 higher than the average wage across all industries. All told, Ohio's bioscience industries generated \$7.1 billion in payroll in 2019, the most recent year for which we have figures available. That is a 21 percent increase over five years.

The biosciences are a sound, smart economic investment for Ohio. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic that disrupted business across our state, Ohio bioscience companies continued to provide jobs and spend on capital improvements. Since 2020, those companies have invested \$1.6 billion in new facilities and expansions that are projected to create more than 6,400 new jobs.

Again, let's continue the growth and pass this bill to help attract new companies to our state that are working on innovative treatments. Those business leaders want to see that Ohio supports precision medicine. H.B. 608 will be an important part of our "Why Ohio?" story.

BioOhio appreciates this committee's passion for the health of Ohioans and Ohio's economy. We ask the Ohio House Health Committee to approve the Biomarker bill to continue advancing both. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edward J. Pauline". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Edward Pauline  
President & CEO  
BioOhio