

## Washington State HB 1689

Exempting biomarker testing from prior authorization for patients with late stage cancer.

Sponsors: Representatives Walen, Harris, Leavitt, Graham, Duerr, Davis, Slatter and Tharinger

January 13, 2022

Thank you Representatives for introducing this literally lifesaving legislation.

I am Kristen Santiago, Senior Director of Public Policy Initiatives for the LUNGeVity Foundation, which is a lung cancer patient advocacy and research foundation.

In addition to my role with LUNGeVity I am also a niece to an aunt who is literally alive today because she had timely access to biomarker testing, at diagnosis and progression. That testing identified her as having EGFR+ lung cancer, and from there she was put on the most appropriate and effective treatment. My aunt and our family are lucky that her insurance covered biomarker testing, and that she had timely access to biomarker testing without delays that can occur from prior authorization, which delay care and cause stress on patients and families.

Unfortunately, not everyone is so lucky and that is why this legislation is so important. All patients should have access to timely, guideline-based biomarker testing, regardless of the type of insurance they have, where they live, or whether they receive their care in a large academic medical center, or in a smaller community setting. Biomarker testing is standard of care for many types of cancer, and saves lives.

This bill is targeted to help people who can be very sick and do not have the luxury of time to wait for prior authorization to be completed before they receive their biomarker testing.

Clinical guidelines recommend biomarker testing as an important clinical tool to identify appropriate treatment options. **Anything that restricts access, or delays biomarker testing will delay when a person can start their individualized treatment. Prior authorization for biomarker testing has the potential to cause harmful delays for patients.** When health plans require prior authorization for biomarker testing for standard-of-care requests that are made in alignment with guidelines, patients can experience an inexcusable delay, and sometimes a denial, of the lifesaving diagnostics that will direct them to timely access to critical therapies.

Thank you.

