

January 24th, 2025

Dear Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and members of the Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services Committee,

I am writing to urge you to support LD107 "a bill to require insurance coverage, including coverage in the MaineCare program, for biomarker testing." As a Thoracic Surgeon practicing in Maine since 1992, I have seen firsthand how the development of targeted agents, immunotherapy and angiogenesis inhibitors have improved patient outcomes and increased survival from many malignancies, but from lung cancer in particular. Prior to the late 1990's, these medications did not exist, but the efforts of many researchers and clinical trials have validated the place for these medications in standard clinical practice today. Multiple large studies have demonstrated dramatic improvements in disease free survival and overall survival over the last decade from the addition of these medications to the armamentarium of cancer treatment. I have seen lung cancer patients treated with immunotherapy have complete remission of what would have been considered untreatable disease only a decade ago. Biomarker testing is essential for the proper selection of these valuable new treatments. Lung cancer is the number one cause of cancer death in Maine, in the United States and in the world. The use of timely biomarker testing gives patients the opportunity to have better outcomes and improved survival. The use of biomarker testing in lung cancer is evidence based and clearly defined in the NCCN (National Comprehensive Cancer Network) guidelines, a standard reference for clinical practice. I strongly urge you to support this legislation so that cancer patients in Maine may be given the best chance of success in their treatment.

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