LUPUS
and
ALLIED DISEASES
Association, Inc.

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

LD 107

January 26, 2025

On behalf of the Lupus and Allied Diseases Association and the millions of Maine residents both directly and indirectly affected by autoimmune conditions, cancer and other diseases of unmet need, we passionately urge you to please support LD 107 An act relating to insurance; requiring health plans to provide coverage for biomarker testing.

As patient stakeholders who represent individuals dealing with serious medical conditions on a daily basis and their loved ones who strongly support establishing essential patient protections that improve access to vital therapies, **we strongly urge your support and passage of LD 107 to ensure that Maine residents covered by state-regulated insurance plans, including MaineCare have coverage for biomarker testing when medically appropriate.** Access to appropriate medication can dramatically improve disease outcome and quality of life and effective treatment can reduce the severity and frequency of disease activity and decelerate its progression, enabling individuals to remain productive.

Due to the heterogeneity of autoimmune diseases like lupus, no two patients are alike and treatment is highly individualized. We have been eagerly awaiting more efficacious and safer groundbreaking treatments that target the offending molecule or cell that disrupts our immune system and in a perfect world, people like us would take one pill a day for treatment instead of forty-eight. We desperately need safer, more innovative treatments that address the pathogenesis of diseases, while impacting what matters most to patients—reducing symptoms, and improving daily functioning, outcomes and quality of life. Biomarker testing will provide the path forward to targeted therapies and precision medicine.

Maine has a longstanding record of providing access to affordable healthcare as well as some of the strongest patient protections in the country. By improving coverage and access to biomarker testing across insurance types, **LD 107** has the potential to reduce health disparities and inequities for communities of color, individuals with lower socioeconomic status, rural communities, disabled populations, and those receiving care in non-academic medical centers who are all currently less likely to receive testing for biomarkers.

The Lupus and Allied Diseases Association was founded in 1978 and is a national non-profit organization led by people with lupus and allied diseases and their loved ones who are dedicated to ensuring that the patient perspective is included and recognized as an equal stakeholder in the healthcare, regulatory and public policy arenas and across the research continuum. It is our goal to improve access to care and quality of life by fostering collaboration among stakeholders and by wielding the patient voice as a catalyst to advance innovative advocacy, education, awareness and biomedical research initiatives that will identify causes, advance better diagnostics, and discover superior treatments, and cures.

We urge your committee and the Maine legislature to support LD 107 and stand with patients and their loved ones by helping to advance biomarker testing and ultimately, precision medicine. There are millions of people who could benefit from innovative drugs now, and many more in the future who are yet to be diagnosed. Patients with rare and chronic diseases of unmet need with only limited or no therapies need access to an array of novel, promising treatments and biomarker testing is the key to unlocking the right treatments for the right patients. **Public policy must keep pace with innovation.**

Please contact me at 315-264-9101 or kathleen@ladainc.org if you have any questions.

We thank you for considering our unique patient viewpoint.

Respectfully Submitted-

Kathleen A. Arntsen

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President & CEO