

Hon. Andrea Stewart-Cousins
New York State Senate
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Hon. Carl Heastie
New York State Assembly
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

February 10, 2026

Subject: Preserve Medicaid patient access to biomarker testing

Dear President Pro Tempore and Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and Speaker Heastie,

On behalf of patients, families, health care providers and advocates from across New York, we, the undersigned organizations, are writing to express our deep concern about the proposed changes to New York Medicaid's coverage policy for biomarker testing (**HMH Part M, Section 12**) and strongly urge that they are **not** included in the one-house and final budgets.

We recognize that the state is in a difficult position with Medicaid funding, but this proposal is short-sighted for the budget and potentially dangerous to the health of New Yorkers and undercuts a huge step forward for health equity.

The governor's budget proposes rolling back important Medicaid coverage for biomarker testing – which is key to matching some patients with the most effective treatment for cancer and other diseases. The legislature passed this legislation with overwhelming, bipartisan support – ensuring equitable access to proven biomarker testing for both Medicaid and state-regulated private plans.

The governor's proposal would reverse this gain for health equity by eliminating the established coverage criteria for Medicaid enrollees, while people with private insurance are not impacted. Consistent coverage criteria across Medicaid and private plans allow providers to understand what is covered and provide equitable treatment for patients across payers.

Without equitable coverage and access to biomarker testing, *advances in precision medicine could exacerbate existing disparities in access to care* and, consequently, health outcomes associated with race, ethnicity, income, and geography.

Despite the clear benefits of biomarker testing, many insurance plans do not cover evidence-based biomarker testing for all patients who need it.

This is a shortsighted effort to save money that could hurt patients – and could potentially cost Medicaid more. As the state grapples with federal funding cuts, it is more important than ever to spend Medicaid dollars efficiently – and upfront spending on biomarker testing can allow patients to avoid costly treatments that will be unnecessary or ineffective.

Research shows that biomarker-informed treatments can improve health outcomes, increase quality of life, and prolong patient survival.^{i,iii} Using the traditional trial and error method to identify an effective treatment for a particular patient can take months — even years. In chronic, degenerative diseases like rheumatoid arthritis, any length of time spent trying (and failing) on ineffective treatments allows the disease to continue causing irreversible damage to the joints, increasing health care consumption and costs. In cancer care and some autoimmune conditions, the length of time it takes to identify an effective treatment can be a matter of life or death. In all cases, ineffective treatments exacerbate the physical, emotional, and economic burdens of disease, and the price is paid by both the patient and the insurer.

We understand that the state may be facing challenges implementing this policy and are open to developing equitable solutions that protect patient access to these critical tests while also addressing concerns about the law. However, the proposed changes included in the Governor’s budget must **not** be included in the one-house and final budgets.

Sincerely,

Advanced Medical Technology Association
Advocates for Universal DPD/DPYD Testing (AUDT)
AiArthritis: International Foundation for Autoimmune & Autoinflammatory Arthritis
ALS Association
ALS United Greater New York
Alzheimer’s Association/Alzheimer’s Impact Movement (AIM)
American Association of Clinical Urologists (AACU)
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American Clinical Laboratory Association
American Lung Association
American Parkinson's Disease Association
American Society of Pharmacovigilance
Arthritis Foundation
Autoimmune Association
Biomarker Collaborative
Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester
Cactus Cancer Society
Cancer Support Community
Cancer Support Team
CancerCare
Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York (CIDNY)
Cheeky Charity
Coalition for 21st Century Medicine (C21)
Coalition of Hematology and Oncology Practices
Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations (CSRO)

Colon Cancer Coalition
Color of Gastrointestinal Illnesses
Columbia University Herbert Irving Comprehensive Cancer Center
Crohn's & Colitis Foundation
Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer
Emily Whitehead Foundation
EndPreeclampsia.org
Exon 20 Group
Familial Dysautonomia Foundation
Fight Colorectal Cancer
Fighting Chance
FORCE: Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered
GI Cancers Alliance, Inc
Global Coalition on Aging
Global Colon Cancer Association
Global Liver Institute
GO2 for Lung Cancer
Head and Neck Cancer Alliance
HEAL Collaborative
Honor the Gift
HPV Cancers Alliance
Hudson Headwaters Health Network
ICAN, International Cancer Advocacy Network
Infusion Access Foundation
Infusion Access Foundation (IAF)
KRAS Kickers
Lung Cancer Research Foundation
LUNgevity Foundation
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
M-CM Network
Medical Society of the State of New York
Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
MET Crusaders
Metro New York Health Care for All
Montefiore Einstein Comprehensive Cancer Center
Mosaic Health
Multiple Sclerosis of Central New York
NAACP NYS Conference

National Alliance on Mental Illness – New York State
National Comprehensive Cancer Network® (NCCN®)
National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD)
National Ovarian Cancer Coalition
New York Oncology Hematology
New York State Academy of Family Physicians
New York State Clinical Laboratory Association
New York State Radiological Society
NewYorkBIO
NewYork-Presbyterian Queens
Northwell Health Cancer Institute
NYU Langone Health
Oncology Nursing Society
One Cancer Place
Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance
Patient Empowerment Network
Patients Rising
PDL1 Amplifieds
Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center
Sandra and Edward Meyer Cancer Center at Weill Cornell Medicine.
Sharsheret
Sickle Cell & Thalassemia Patient Network
Sisters Network: A National African American Breast Cancer Survivorship Organization
Stony Brook Cancer Center
Stupid Cancer
Susan G. Komen
The Canavan Foundation
The Michael J. Fox Foundation
The New York State Neurological Society
The Raymond Foundation, Inc
The Tisch Cancer Institute at Mount Sinai
TOUCH, The Black Breast Cancer Alliance
Triage Cancer
VHL Alliance
Wilmot Cancer Institute at the University of Rochester Medical Center
ZERO Prostate Cancer

CC: *All State Legislators*
Kathy Hochul, Governor
James McDonald, DOH Commissioner
Amir Bassiri, New York State Medicaid Director

¹ Gutierrez, M. E., Choi, K., Lanman, R. B., Licitra, E. J., Skrzypczak, S. M., Pe Benito, R., Wu, T., Arunajadai, S., Kaur, S., Harper, H., Pecora, A. L., Schultz, E. V., & Goldberg, S. L. (2017). Genomic Profiling of Advanced Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer in Community Settings: Gaps and Opportunities. *Clinical lung cancer*, 18(6), 651–659. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clcc.2017.04.004>

ⁱⁱ Mendelsohn, J., Lazar, V., & Kurzrock, R. (2015). Impact of Precision Medicine in Diverse Cancers: A Meta-Analysis of Phase II Clinical Trials. *Journal of clinical oncology : official journal of the American Society of Clinical Oncology*, 33(32), 3817–3825. <https://doi.org/10.1200/JCO.2015.61.5997>