

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (HHS)

Resolution HHS-22-42

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRECISION MEDICINE AND BIOMARKER TESTING

WHEREAS, precision medicine, which is also called personalized health care or individualized medicine, is an evolving field in which health care providers use analysis of a patient's biospecimen, known as biomarker testing, to determine which medical treatments will work best for each patient;

WHEREAS, by combining the data from biomarker testing with an individual's medical history, circumstances and values, health care providers can direct a patient to targeted treatment, which benefits both patients and the overall health care system;

WHEREAS, the field of precision medicine has the potential to be transformative in ensuring the delivery of the right treatment to the right patient and the right time and to avoid treatment that may cause physical or financial toxicity;

WHEREAS, 60 percent of treatments in preclinical development rely on biomarker data;

WHEREAS, biomedicine and the understanding of the characteristics of a patient's disease that informs precision medicine is evolving rapidly;

WHEREAS, health care providers are increasingly utilizing technologies, such as biomarker testing, that can help identify gene mutations, alterations, or protein expressions specific to individual patients;

WHEREAS, health outcomes are improved through the use of precision medicine, for example patients with certain types of lung cancer who received biomarker testing had a 28 percent reduction in mortality;

WHEREAS, oncology has been leading the way in precision medicine advancements, the tailoring of treatment to specific biomarkers is being explored in other diseases and conditions;

WHEREAS, collectively Blacks in the United States have the highest death rate and shortest survival of any racial or ethnic group for most cancers;

WHEREAS, without efforts to increase access to biomarker testing and precision medicine for groups that have been marginalized, disparities in cancer survival could increase;

WHEREAS, there are notable racial/ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities in access and utilization of biomarker testing, for example Black men have the highest rates of lung cancer of any racial group and eligible Black patients are less likely to receive biomarker testing compared to White patients and colorectal cancer patients who are older, Black, uninsured, or Medicaid-insured, are less likely to receive guideline-indicated biomarker testing;

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WHEREAS, improving access to biomarker testing is important to advancing health outcomes, treatment, and health equity;

WHEREAS, The National Academy of Medicine considers biomarker tests to be “key to unlocking the promise” of precision medicine;

WHEREAS, biomarker testing is available for an ever-increasing range of conditions and diseases, but patient access to these tests is not keeping pace with the rate of innovation;

WHEREAS, a lack of awareness among providers and patients, a lack of common terminology, and deficient coverage policies by both public and private payers are preventing effective adoption and integration of biomarker testing into precision medicine particularly for diverse communities and in nonacademic health care settings;

WHEREAS, appropriate awareness and education about the ways biomarker testing can be used to support diagnosis, treatment, and monitoring of patients in a personalized way; and

WHEREAS, states can promote awareness, education and action related to improving access to biomarker testing.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Black Caucus of State Legislators supports raising awareness, encouraging education, and improving understanding of the ways biomarker testing can be used to support diagnosis, treatment, and monitoring of patients in a personalized way and the importance of ensuring access to these advanced diagnostic technologies; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, members of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate, and other federal and state government officials and agencies as appropriate.

SPONSOR(S): Representative Vivian Flowers (AR) and Representative Ajay Pittman (OK)

Committee of Jurisdiction: Health and Human Services (HHS) Policy Committee

Ratified in Plenary Session: December 2, 2021

Ratification certified by: Representative Billy Mitchell (GA), NBCSL President