

GENERAL ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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Testimony in Support of S-2201

On behalf of the Latino Policy Institute at Roger Williams University, we support the passage of the biomarker testing coverage bill (S-2201).

Comprehensive biomarker testing can ensure that treatment is tailored to individual patients with specific needs. It can also provide important data to track health changes over time thereby ensuring that treatment decisions are in the best long term interest of patients. Simply put, biomarker testing facilitates the creation of treatment protocols that can significantly improve health outcomes. Despite evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of biomarker testing, currently not all individuals benefit equitably from testing. There are notable racial/ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities in access and utilization of these advancements in care.

Advances in precision medicine, for example, could increase existing disparities in cancer outcomes by race, ethnicity, income, and geography if no action is taken to expand coverage and access to biomarker testing. Currently, sixty percent of oncology drugs launched in the past five years require or recommend biomarker testing prior to use. Insurance coverage for biomarker testing is failing to keep pace with innovation in treatment options.

This bill advances health equity by requiring that health insurers, nonprofit hospital service corporations, nonprofit medical service corporations, health maintenance organizations, and RI's medical assistance program provide coverage for biomarker testing. We firmly believe that healthcare is a human right. The passage of this legislation will be a pivotal step in ensuring that Rhode Islanders have access to the best care for their specific needs.

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