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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
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July 28, 2023

Katie Merritt
Director of Policy and Planning
Office of Insurance Commissioner
1326 Strawberry Square
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Director Merritt:

I write today to urge you to add coverage of biomarker testing to Pennsylvania's essential health benefits (EHB) package.

Under the Affordable Care Act, individual and small group (50 or fewer employees) health insurance policies must cover the ten categories of EHBs. Each state can select a benchmark plan to describe what specific benefits must be included in each EHB category.

Pennsylvania is behind the times. We have not updated our benchmark plan since 2017. The Insurance Department's reevaluation of Pennsylvania's EHB package shows the department's commitment to ensuring consumers get the care they need, when they need it.

Biomarker testing makes it possible to tailor cancer treatments so that patients get the right treatment the first time. However, insurance coverage and the cost of biomarker testing varies, leaving this important tool in fighting cancer out of reach for many individuals due to cost. That's why I introduced House Bill 1594. But the legislative process takes time. And the Insurance Department, by updating Pennsylvania's EHB package, can ensure coverage of biomarker testing in individual and small group policies.

Ensuring coverage of biomarker testing in Pennsylvania's EHB package would give more individuals with cancer access to this lifesaving tool. I urge you to ensure that coverage of biomarker testing, as contemplated in my House Bill 1594, is included in any update to Pennsylvania's EHB package.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Danielle Friel Otten".

Danielle Friel Otten
State Representative
155th Legislative District