

DATE: March 19, 2025

TO: The Honorable Rob Nosse, Chair House Behavioral Health and Health Care Committee

FROM: Clare Pierce-Wrobel, Director
Health Policy and Analytics Division
Oregon Health Authority

SUBJECT: House Bill 3421

Chair Nosse and members of the Committee:

The Health Policy and Analytics Division in the Oregon Health Authority welcomes the opportunity to describe the current coverage for biomarker testing under the Oregon Health Plan (OHP). We will also describe the Health Evidence Review Commission (HERC) process that led to these coverage decisions. HERC's main task is to develop the Prioritized List of Health Services, which contains the evidence-based criteria which guide coverage for a variety of services for OHP, including biomarker tests.

As defined in HB 3421, the term "biomarkers" is a very broad term. The term can include a range of tests, from routine blood tests that check kidney and liver function, to advanced genetic tests related to cancer or mental health treatment. Some biomarker tests are proven to have high value in guiding care and managing health conditions. Others are unproven, or have been shown to have no value in guiding care. Some are approved for marketing by the Food and Drug Administration through a process that does not require demonstrated evidence they improve health or guide treatment.

Currently, the Oregon Health Plan covers medically necessary and appropriate biomarker tests. New testing codes are released every quarter by the American Medical Association, and HERC regularly reviews new testing codes and makes recommendations about whether they are medically necessary based on evidence about

whether they can be used to help patients. In some cases, the Commission develops diagnostic guidelines to limit use of certain tests to situations.

HERC has defined criteria to ensure coverage for many biomarker tests, including but not limited to:

- [Non-prenatal genetic tests](#), including tests for children with disabilities (including whole exome sequencing) and tests to assess the need for FDA-approved medications
- [Prenatal genetic testing](#)
- Proven biomarker [tests of cancer tissue to help guide the best treatment](#), [tests to assess cancer risk](#) and [next generation sequencing](#) of tumors, allowing for multiple biopsies as described in the bill
- Testing [required](#) in order to follow FDA labeling for Alzheimer’s disease prescription medications

Given the rapidly evolving field of biomarker testing, HERC staff regularly reviews codes for new tests. Our staff is available to answer any questions the Committee may have as it considers this bill.

Sincerely,



Clare Pierce-Wrobel
Director, Health Policy and Analytics
Oregon Health Authority