



March 15, 2023

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Minnesota State Senate
95 University Ave W
Saint Paul, MN 55155

RE: SF 1948 - Support

Dear Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

On behalf of the International Foundation for Autoimmune & Autoinflammatory Arthritis (AiArthritis), I encourage you to vote yes on SF 1948 when it is before you in committee.

We are leaders in advancing education, advocacy, and research for those impacted by autoimmune and autoinflammatory arthritis (AiArthritis) diseases through peer-led guidance, collaboration, and resources that are driven by patient-identified issues and patient-infused solutions. As we are led by patients we understand the importance of early, appropriate treatment.

SF 1948 will require that select health plans and insurers cover biomarker testing that is supported by medical and scientific evidence. **Biomarker testing connects patients with the most effective treatments.**

Precision medicine uses biomarker testing to gather information about a person's own body to prevent, diagnose, or treat disease. The information gleaned from biomarker testing can help determine the treatment that will work the best for the specific patient, and can also allow patients to avoid treatments that are unlikely to be effective. **While biomarker testing originated in cancer care, it is rapidly increasing in usage for other conditions such as autoimmune disease.**

Using the traditional method of trial and error, identifying an effective treatment for a particular patient can take months – even years. In chronic, degenerative diseases like Rheumatoid Arthritis, for example, any length of time spent trying (and failing) ineffective treatments allows for the disease to progress, causing potentially irreversible damage to joints, tissues, and organs. Matter-of-fact, 70% of patients with any AiArthritis Disease will develop comorbidities due to uncontrolled inflammation. . **This not only causes pain and suffering for the patient, but increases health care consumption and costs for both the person affected and the health system as a whole.**

We urge you to help ensure patients have access to early, appropriate treatment with your support of SF 1948.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Viscarra
Public Policy Manager
International Foundation for **Autoimmune & Autoinflammatory** Arthritis