

**Aaron Broadwell, MD**  
President

February 10, 2025

**Gary Feldman, MD**  
Immediate Past President

House Consumer Protection and Commerce Committee  
415 South Beretania St.  
Honolulu, HI 96813

**Madelaine Feldman, MD**  
VP, Advocacy & Government Affairs

**Michael Saitta, MD, MBA**  
Treasurer

**Re: Support HB 553 – Coverage of Biomarker Testing**

**Firas Kassab, MD**  
Secretary

Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun and members of the House Consumer Protection and Commerce Committee

**Erin Arnold, MD**  
Director

The Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations (CSRO) supports HB 553, which would ensure patients can access biomarker testing that allows health care providers to better determine the best treatment plan for the patient. CSRO serves the practicing rheumatologist and is comprised of over 40 state rheumatology societies nationwide with a mission of advocating for excellence in the field of rheumatology and ensuring access to the highest quality of care for the management of rheumatologic and musculoskeletal disease.

**Leyka Barbosa, MD**  
Director

**Kostas Botsoglou, MD**  
Director

**Mark Box, MD**  
Director

Rheumatologic diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis and lupus, are systemic and incurable, but innovations in medicine over the last several decades have enabled rheumatologists to better manage these conditions. With access to the right treatment early in the disease, patients can generally delay or even avoid damage to their bones and joints, as well as reduce reliance on pain medications and other ancillary services, thus improving their quality of life.

**Michael Brooks, MD**  
Director

**Amish Dave, MD, MPH**  
Director

**Harry Gewanter, MD, MACR**  
Director

Biomarker testing is a pivotal advancement in precision medicine and an essential tool for rheumatologists and other physicians in determining the most effective treatment for individual patients based on unique biological information derived from proteins and genes. Biomarkers have the potential to revolutionize how we approach treatment selection, allowing for targeted therapies that can significantly improve health outcomes and quality of life for patients with rheumatologic conditions. As we move toward a healthcare landscape that emphasizes efficiency and patient-centered care, HB 553 will help ensure that these innovative diagnostic tools are accessible to all patients who could benefit from them.

**Adrienne Hollander, MD**  
Director

**Robert Levin, MD**  
Director

**Amar Majjho, MD**  
Director

**Gregory Niemer, MD**  
Director

The complexities of rheumatologic conditions often necessitate a lengthy and painful diagnosis process for patients, typically characterized by a trial-and-error approach to find the right therapy. This not only prolongs patient suffering but also results in increased healthcare expenditures as patients cycle through various treatments that may not be suitable for their specific conditions. By incorporating biomarker testing into medical practice, rheumatologists can identify effective therapies more quickly, leading to timely and personalized patient care. Early detection can also prevent or significantly delay disease progression, including side effects, functional decline and adverse events.

**Joshua Stalow, MD**  
Director

**EXECUTIVE OFFICE**

**Leslie Del Ponte**  
Executive Director

We urge the House Consumer Protection and Commerce Committee to support and advance HB 553, recognizing the profound impact it will have on patient care and overall healthcare costs. Together, we can make strides toward a healthcare model that prioritizes precision, efficiency, and the well-being of patients. We thank you for your

consideration and are happy to further detail our comments to the Committee upon request.

Respectfully,

Handwritten signature of Aaron Broadwell in black ink.

Aaron Broadwell, MD, FACR  
President  
Board of Directors

Handwritten signature of Madelaine A. Feldman in black ink.

Madelaine A. Feldman, MD, FACR  
VP, Advocacy & Government Affairs  
Board of Directors