



TESTIMONY OF JENNIFER HAWKS BLAND, CEO OF NEW YORK BIO
JOINT ASSEMBLY AND SENATE HEALTH BUDGET HEARING

February 10, 2026

Assembly Ways & Means Chair Pretlow, Senate Finance Chair Krueger, Assembly Health Chair Paulin, Senate Health Chair Rivera, and members of the Joint Health Budget Committee, thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony for your consideration as you review proposals in the Governor's proposed 2026 – 2027 New York State Budget.

I would like to express our concerns regarding Part M, Section 12 of the Health and Mental Hygiene bill S.9007/A.10007. We strongly encourage the legislature to reject this proposal in its one-house budget proposals. In short, it narrows eligibility for Medicaid patients to access biomarker testing to the sole discretion of the Department of Health, if it determines it is a “medical necessity.” Biomarker testing is critical for determining the most effective treatment for cancer and other diseases. NewYorkBIO strongly supported the original legislation that provided broad access to biomarker testing for patients based on several eligibility categories, (FDA approved, CMS covered, nationally recognized clinical practice guidelines or peer reviewed literature/studies).

I do want to highlight one component of the Executive Budget Proposal that NYBIO strongly supports because of the benefits it will provide to the broader healthcare ecosystem in New York. The Executive Budget Aid to Localities Appropriations Bill (S.9003/A.1003) proposes a Bolstering Biotechnology Initiative. Such initiatives demonstrate strategic investments that strengthen innovation, expand patient access to cutting-edge therapies, and enhance the state’s global competitiveness. The key components of this proposal represent a comprehensive approach to strengthening New York’s biotechnology economy and are the result of significant work by the Emerging Technology Advisory Board that the Governor convened to consider ways to increase the impact of this important sector of our New York economy. Investment in bioscience will also help the state deliver better health outcome benefits to communities statewide, creating benefit for both early-stage companies and patients.

Conclusion

The State of New York has traditionally prioritized patients and their access to cutting edge therapies. Rolling back eligibility for biomarker testing undermines access for New York patients, and we urge you to reject that proposal. If you have further questions regarding either of these critical issues, please contact me at Jennifer.Bland@newyorkbio.org.

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