

JERRY MORAN

Allergy Testing Access Act of 2019

Senator Jerry Moran (R-Kan.)

Allergy testing is vital for children and adults, and can reduce emergency room visits, hospitalizations, missed school days, and in serious cases, save lives. Allergic diseases are the sixth leading cause of chronic illness in the U.S., with more than 50 million Americans living with allergy symptoms, carrying an associated cost of over \$18 billion.

THE PROBLEM:

Inconsistencies remain in Medicare and Medicaid coverage of allergy testing that both reduce access and increase overall costs.

Peer-reviewed literature from the National Institutes of Health has established the accuracy of both blood tests (in vitro specific IgE) and skin tests (percutaneous) as confirmatory tests for allergies. Despite this, many Medicare and Medicaid coverage policies deny equal coverage and access to only blood-based allergy tests. Currently, access is limited to areas in which a local coverage determination has been made by the Medicare Administrative Contractor to expand access to blood testing. Areas where equal coverage has been introduced have witnessed a reduction in overall costs per beneficiary without disruption of services, while retaining similar skin to blood test usage ratios.

Inequities in access to allergy tests which are safe and accurate only serve to proliferate negative health outcomes and alienate populations in rural settings that may not have access to a specialist. There is an unnecessary financial burden associated with healthcare disparities resultant from a lack of equal access to allergy testing coverage.

THE SOLUTION:

The *Allergy Testing Access Act of 2019* addresses these inequalities by expanding access and ensuring proper diagnosis of allergies for patients, including the elderly and young children, in rural communities. This legislation will remove barriers which inhibit patient access to safe and accurate allergy tests, thereby empowering patients with personal healthcare information that can help them live healthy, productive lives.

For more information, or to be added as a cosponsor, please contact Kyle Christian in Senator Moran's office at Kyle_Christian@moran.senate.gov or by calling (202) 224-6521.