

ASHG issues statement supporting licensure of genetic counselors

10 September 2015

The American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG) issued today a [statement of support](#) for state licensure of certified genetic counselors. To receive and maintain licensure, providers would need to receive a degree in genetic counseling, pass a national-level exam to receive certification, and fulfill continuing education requirements.

Genetic counselors are health professionals with specialized graduate degrees and training in medical genetics, genomics, and counseling. Currently, 15 states [issue licenses](#) for genetic counselors, and six additional states have passed licensure laws. The ASHG statement supports these states' decisions to license genetic counselors and encourages the remaining states to enact licensure.

In medical settings, genetic counselors often are members of a healthcare team, but their training and expertise allow independent interaction with patients. Licensure would allow genetic counselors to order genetic and genomic tests in many instances, and to provide pre- and post-test counseling and education. It would also provide the credentials many hospitals need to approve billing and reimbursement for these services, and would allow maximum flexibility in how their services are delivered.

"Healthcare reform and the rapidly expanding role of genomics in healthcare decisions will increase the demand for qualified genetics professionals," said ASHG President Neil Risch, PhD. "State licensure of certified counselors will help ensure that the healthcare system has a qualified workforce to provide genetic and genomic services for the growing number of patients and families who need them."

"Licensure of genetic counselors will improve the public's access to high-quality genetic and genomic services across the country," said Joy Larsen Haidle, MS, CGC, President of the National

Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC). "NSGC supports state licensure of genetic counselors in accordance with our guiding principles, which aim to ensure that licensing laws cover a similar scope across states and maximize flexibility among states in how genetic counselors practice."

Provided by American Society of Human Genetics

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