

Date March 25, 2019

From Hannah Covach

Chair Salinas and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share support for HB 3231. I support efforts that will improve access to quality healthcare services, including genetic counseling services in Oregon. Efforts to secure licensure for genetic counselors will improve the quality of these services for Oregonians.

I was born prematurely with a heart condition and spent most of my childhood in the hospital for several mysterious medical conditions. Although I had seen many specialists, including a team of cardiologists as a young adult, it wasn't until my first pregnancy that a genetic counselor was able to put all of the pieces together and help discover my underlying diagnosis. I have a very rare condition called "Smooth Muscle Dysfunction Syndrome" caused by a specific variant in the *ACTA2* gene. I am one of the oldest living patients with this condition and the only one to successfully deliver a live born baby, in part because proper diagnosis has improved my medical care and surveillance.

Licensure for genetic counselors is critical to ensure that providers of genetic counseling services have appropriate training and credentials so that individuals receive proper information and care. Currently, there is no legal specification in Oregon for who may use the title of genetic counselor. Licensure for genetic counselors is an important mechanism by which consumers of genetic counseling services can identify appropriately qualified providers.

I believe it is in the interest of patients for the state to ensure genetic counselors are licensed and qualified to provide genetic services.

Sincerely,

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