

HB 2619 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Health Care

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Meeting Dates: 2/4, 3/4

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Defines "genetic counseling." Authorizes the Health Licensing Office (HLO) to issue a license to practice genetic counseling and specifies qualifications. Prohibits an individual from practicing genetic counseling unless the individual is licensed by HLO. Allows HLO to adopt rules to create licensure, refuse to issue or renew a license, and suspend or revoke or otherwise limit an authorization to practice genetic counseling. Imposes civil penalty for violation of licensure requirements. Requires licensed genetic counselor to refer a patient to a licensed physician or other appropriate licensed health care practitioner if they become aware of a medical condition or disease that is outside the scope of practice of genetic counseling. Clarifies scope and practice for a licensed genetic counselor including requirement that counseling be culturally and linguistically appropriate for the patient or their family. Becomes operative January 1, 2022. Takes effect on 91st day following adjournment sine die.

REVENUE: statement issued - no revenue impact.

FISCAL: statement issued - minimal fiscal impact..

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- States with licensure for genetic counselors; improved patient access to genetic counseling services
- Genetic diagnosis; complex genetic testing
- Education, expertise, and professional certifications for genetic counselors
- Cultural competency training for genetic counselors, if licensed in Oregon; ongoing continuing education units (CEUs)

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The American Society of Human Genetics states that genetic counselors are health professionals with specialized graduate degrees and training in medical genetics, genomics, and counseling. According to the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), genetic services should be provided by a genetic specialist who has specialized education. Genetic counselors often engage individuals with risk assessment, patient education, facilitation of testing, results disclosure, among other services (OHA website). As of October 2020, approximately 25 states, including Washington and California, have enacted licensure laws for genetic counselors. Oregon Health and Science University reported approximately 60 genetic counselors were practicing in Oregon in 2019.

House Bill 2619 establishes licensure for individuals to practice genetic counseling in Oregon.