

HB 2619 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Health Care

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Meeting Dates: 5/3, 5/12

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.

House Vote: Passed. Ayes, 41; Nays, 13; Excused, 5.

FISCAL: Minimal fiscal impact

REVENUE: No revenue impact.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Training and professional credentials of genetic counselors
- Improving access to services offered by genetic counselors
- Patient referral models for genetic counselors

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, and results disclosure, among other services. 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.