

I am writing in support of HB 2619 requiring genetic counselors to be licensed in Oregon. As a American Board of Genetic Counseling certified genetic counselor with over 30 years of experience prior to retirement, I have witnessed the rise of the profession and the increasing complexity of genetic information.

With experience in clinical, academic and research realms, I have witnessed numerous episodes of patient harm related to well-meaning, but uninformed mis-interpretation of the results of genetic testing by non-genetics providers. For example, I spoke with a relative of my patient who assured me that his provider had told him that his genetic test result was normal. He sent me a copy of the testing which revealed a mutation in a gene associated with an increased risk for cancer. The abnormal genetic test result had implications for both this person and his family, enabling high-risk cancer screening and risk-reducing surgery.

There have also been numerous cases of inappropriate testing being ordered, either by ordering more expensive testing for changes in numerous genes when a known mutation has been found in the family ( e.g., a \$4,000 test instead of a \$500 test) or unnecessarily repeating tests. The waste of precious health-care resources cannot be understated, both for the individual consumer and for society.

In addition, I had many patients over the years who had never been appropriately counseled regarding the possible hazards associated with genetic testing and the possibility that the test results might be used to discriminate against themselves or their children.

Genetic testing is complex and as much is unknown about the implications of the results of genetic testing as is known. As the field of genetics expands, the need for trained, knowledgeable genetics experts will be critical. Our state needs to assure that our population is protected from misinformation and provided with access to potentially life-saving information from skilled, trained genetics professionals. Please support HB 2619.

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