

## TESTIMONY

### SB 370 AN ACT CONCERNING SERVICES PROVIDED BY GENETIC COUNSELORS

**Public Health Committee**

**March 16, 2012**

Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, Senator Welch, Representative Perillo, and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee:

We thank you for your interest in learning about the roles genetic counselors perform in patient healthcare and appreciate your support of our efforts to obtain licensure in the State of Connecticut.

We received our training at American Board of Genetic Counseling (ABGC) - accredited programs. We have both received our certification through the ABGC. As genetic counselors, we provide accurate and timely information on the hereditary basis of disease. We provide our patients and their families with risk assessments, appropriate genetic tests, interpretation of results, psychosocial support, and access to additional resources.

In September 2009, the Katherine Ann King Rudolph Hereditary Cancer Genetics Program at the Hospital of Central Connecticut was founded. With the support of Dr. James Hoffman and HOCC administrators, the program was launched at the cancer centers in three major hospitals in central Connecticut. The response to this program was overwhelming, and the number of physician referrals to our program continues to grow. We work closely with many other healthcare providers, including physicians and surgeons, nurse navigators, pathologists, midlevel providers and social workers, in order to facilitate coordinated care. We also provide educational programs to the medical and lay public about hereditary cancer syndromes.

Through the development of this program, we have seen how vitally important it is for our patients to know that the care they are receiving is from a genetic counselor with the appropriate training. Our training has comprehensively prepared us for understanding the nuances of how hereditary cancer syndromes may present and how individuals respond to being identified as at a high risk. In this regard, licensure will provide important protection for our patients.

We are in full support of, and will fully participate in, the determination of scope of practice for genetic counselors, and a future bill granting licensure of genetic counselors in the State of Connecticut. While SB 370 may be a first step in this process, we are concerned that the language limits our ability to practice in the multidisciplinary way that has been so successful.

We are truly appreciative of your time and efforts in this matter.

Sincerely,

Linda Steinmark, M.S., C.G.C.

Sara Rhode, M.S., C.G.C.