

Testimony of
Andrew Salner, MD, Director Helen & Harry Gray Cancer Center, Hartford Hospital
in support of
SB 857- AN ACT CONCERNING LICENSURE FOR GENETIC COUNSELORS

February 20, 2015

Dear Senator Gerratana, and Rep. Ritter,

I am writing to testify in support of SB 857. An Act Concerning Licensure for Genetic Counselors, along with the proposed language additions submitted by the genetic counselors.

As the director of the Helen & Harry Gray Cancer Center at Hartford Hospital, I work closely with our cancer genetic counselors. They are integral to patient care. They participate in our multi-disciplinary tumor boards. They work closely with oncologists, pathologists, nurse navigators and psychologists/social workers, and are an integral part of our cancer disease management teams.

A genetic counselor is a valued member of the cancer care team. Many national societies, including the American College of Surgeons' Commission on Cancer, American Society of Clinical Oncology, American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and others recommend that genetic testing be provided in the context of genetic counseling. This is because genetic counselors have specific training in the genetics of hereditary diseases, analysis of family histories, risk assessment and counseling. Genetic counselors support patients in their medical decision-making. Their knowledge of the complexities of available testing is crucial to selecting the right test at the right time.

Licensure is becoming an accepted credential nationally, with 19 states currently issuing licenses or with legislation passed. In these states, access to genetic services has increased for patients.

Licensure for genetic counselors will provide assurance to the physicians and APRNs who refer to our genetic counseling program that the counselors are regulated and have received appropriate training and continuing education.

Incorporating genetic counselors into the testing process has been shown to lead to cost-efficient risk identification and more appropriate genetic testing.

With the rapid advances in genetic technology, genetic testing and counseling services are quickly moving to the forefront of biosciences. With this in mind, licensure is needed in order to ensure that the quality of these professionals remains high and that the public is afforded the best level of care.

Thank you for your support.



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