



Connecticut Department of Public Health

Testimony Presented Before the Public Health Committee

February 20, 2015

**Commissioner Jewel Mullen, MD, MPH, MPA
860-509-7101**

Senate Bill 857 - An Act Concerning Licensure for Genetic Counselors

The Department provides the following information regarding Senate Bill 857. Senate Bill 857 would require the Department to license genetic counselors and give the Department regulatory jurisdiction of the profession.

The Department convened a scope of practice review committee based on a request submitted from genetic counselors through the process established in CGS 19a-16d. The report that resulted from the process was submitted to the Public Health Committee in February 2015 and included information on the associated costs and benefits of different mechanisms to ensure public protection from unqualified providers.

An option to licensure that would have no cost to the state is statutory recognition. This recognition would ensure that all genetic counselors in Connecticut have met the same minimum qualifications related to competence, and define who can or cannot call themselves a genetic counselor. The Department of Public Health would have no authority to take disciplinary action against genetic counselors regarding practice standards. However, the complaint process through the American Board of Genetic Counseling, the national certifying body for genetic counselors referenced in the proposed legislation, can be utilized in lieu of State discipline.

Licensure of genetic counselors in Connecticut would similarly ensure that all genetic counselors in Connecticut have met the same minimum qualifications related to competence, but would also give the Department of Public Health authority to take disciplinary action against genetic counselors regarding practice standards or other behaviors, or against unlicensed individuals holding themselves out to be genetic counselors. Licensing fees from the approximately 70 certified genetic counselors in Connecticut would generate revenue for the State's General Fund. However, there would be a fiscal impact to the Department of Public Health associated with implementing and maintaining a new licensing program. Consequently, due to the additional resources that would be needed to implement the requirements associated with this bill, the Department is not supportive at this time.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this information.

***Phone: (860) 509-7269, Fax: (860) 509-7100, Telephone Device for the Deaf (860) 509-7191
410 Capitol Avenue - MS # 13GRE, P.O. Box 340308 Hartford, CT 06134
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