

Testimony of
Joseph Tucker, Medical Geneticist,
in support of
SB 857- AN ACT CONCERNING LICENSURE FOR GENETIC COUNSELORS

February 20, 2015

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, Senator Markley, Representative Srinivasan and members of the Public Health Committee: My name is Joseph Tucker and I live in Berlin, Connecticut. I am writing to testify in strong support of Senate Bill 857- An Act Concerning Licensure for Genetic Counselors. Thank you for raising this bill.

As a practicing physician in the field of medical genetics, I work very closely with a number of highly trained and experienced genetic counselors. My patients depend on the information provided by genetic counselors in order to make informed decisions about their medical care. It is critical that this information is provided by individuals with appropriate training and qualifications.

In my practice, I have encountered patients who have received inadequate, misleading, or incorrect information about their genetic status from unqualified individuals. Sometimes these patients believe they had seen a genetic counselor, when in fact, they had not. One of my patients came to our service with some very alarming results regarding her genetic predisposition to breast cancer from a well-known direct-to-consumer genetic testing company. Understandably, she was terrified and extremely upset. She had received little or no genetic counseling from this company and could have made a terrible mistake in directing her medical care. After careful review by one of our genetic counselors, these test results were found to be false. If this patient had seen an appropriately trained and licensed genetic counselor prior to her testing, this unfortunate series of events would not have happened.

This bill will help ensure that Connecticut residents are fully aware of the credentials, level of education and training, and professional standards of the individuals who provide genetic counseling in our State.

For these reasons, I support Bill 857. I also support the modifications and comments on the bill that were shared with the committee chairs by our team of genetic counselors, geneticists, and other interested individuals. I look forward to our state joining the growing number of states nationwide that require licensure for genetic counselors.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Joseph Tucker MD

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