

Molly A. Brewer, MD, Chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology Department, UConn Health

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 Molly Brewer and I am here to testify in strong support of Senate Bill 857- An Act Concerning Licensure for Genetic Counselors.

I have led UConn Health's Division of Gynecologic Oncology since 2006, and was recently named Chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, in April 2014. My clinical and research interests in women's cancer prevention are nationally recognized. I lead a multidisciplinary women's cancer prevention team and I am in constant collaboration within UConn, outside universities and institutions to develop new technologies to detect ovarian cancer. I received my medical degree from the State University of New York (SUNY) in Syracuse and completed a residency in obstetrics and gynecology at Oregon Health Science in Portland. I was Galloway Fellow at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York and completed a fellowship in gynecologic oncology at the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston where I stayed on the faculty for five years. In addition, I received a master's degree from the University of Michigan School of Public Health in Statistics and Clinical Research Design.

I have worked very closely with genetic counselors at UCONN Health for the past 8 years, both in the area of hereditary cancer risk assessment and prenatal genetics. These individuals who have a Master's degree and mandatory continuing education are integral parts of the health care team. Their unique skills are noteworthy in both being able to explain the complexities of inherited risk to patients with little or no education in genetics to also being educators of the medical students, residents and fellows.

Genetic counselors are professionals whose training includes a Master's degree and mandatory continuing education. Genetic counselors provide an important and needed service. They have expertise in genetics and genetic counseling and function as an essential member of the health care team.

I have had patients who had their "genetic counseling" at other sites from individuals who provided less than optimal information, and were not provided with accurate recommendations.

It is trending that genetic counselors are becoming licensed in 19 states so far and it is time that Connecticut joins there lead, as this helps to ensure that the quality of practitioners is very high and that our patients know where and how to access quality care and the public knows who are not providing the comprehensive care that genetic counselors provide.

Thank you for your time.



Sincerely,

Molly A. Brewer, DVM, MD, MS
Professor and Chair Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology
Division of Gynecologic Oncology
University of Connecticut Health Center
Research Professor Electrical and Computer Engineering
University of Connecticut