

# UCONN | SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

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February 17, 2015

Re: SB 857 Testimony of

Peter Benn, PhD, FACMG, DSc.

Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, Senator Markley, Representative Srinivasan and members of the Public Health Committee:

This letter is in support of Connecticut's impending act that would provide licensure to genetic counselors.

Genetics, genomics and personalized medicine is widely recognized as integral to the future of healthcare. Indeed, the State of Connecticut has recognized this in its vision of Bioscience Connecticut, the Jackson Laboratory, and the future of the University of Connecticut Health Center. These State initiatives are part of a broader picture where molecular genetic technology is providing powerful new diagnostic tests, facilitating optimal treatments and providing anticipatory information that can help prevent disease.

Genetic counselors are at the forefront of the management of this genetic information into healthcare. Counselors help ensure that the most appropriate testing is utilized. Genetic test reports typically contain complex technical data, risk information, and a recommendation that the patient receives genetic counseling. Genetic counselors provide this genetic information in the context of supportive care and sensitivity that is tailored to each patient's/family's particular needs. They have received specialized training in genetics and genomics that complements a broad range of medical specialties. Genetic counselors are also involved in the education of other healthcare professionals and the public at-large.

For Connecticut residents to receive the full benefits of the emerging genomic technologies, it is important that we have appropriately trained and qualified genetic counselors. Licensure of genetic counselors will help ensure that this is achieved and that we are competitive with other States who have already introduced licensure. Licensure, as in any health field, can ensure that our residents are protected from unqualified providers who might

hold themselves out as experts, but who have not received the appropriate training and continuing education.

I therefore recommend passage of SB 857 An Act Concerning Licensure for Genetic Counselors.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "PBenn". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Peter Benn, PhD, FACMG, DSc.  
Director, Human Genetics Laboratory,  
Professor, Department of Genetics and Genome Sciences.