

Sally S. Rosengren

SB 857

Public Health Committee Testimony: SB 857

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My name is Sally S. Rosengren and I am a medical geneticist in the Division of Human Genetics at UCONN Health Center and Department of Genetics at CT Children's Medical Center. I live in New Hartford CT. I appreciate the opportunity to express my support of SB 857, and thank Senator Gerratana and Representative Ritter for raising this bill, which pertains to the licensure of genetic counselors in the State of Connecticut.

I am Associate Professor in the Department of Pediatrics and Department of Genetics and Developmental Biology at UCONN School of Medicine, and a licensed board-certified pediatrician and medical geneticist. I work closely with my 6 genetic counseling and one MD- geneticist colleagues. I see pediatric and adult patients, teach medical students, residents and other trainees, and frequently order genetic testing.

I have been a medical geneticist for almost 30 years and have seen how dramatically the practice of Genetic Medicine has changed. Genetic testing used to be rarely performed, usually only for pediatric patients, and only a few reference laboratories provided this testing. In 2015, there are multiple reference laboratories throughout our state and our country that perform a wide variety of testing, ranging from Non-invasive Prenatal Testing (NIPT), which can detect an increasing number of fetal chromosome anomalies in a pregnant woman's blood, to Whole Genome Microarray used to detect genetic forms of autism and other learning problems, Next-Gen DNA sequencing panels used to detect the genetic underpinnings of many common adult conditions, and Whole Exome Sequencing, which can analyze a patient's entire genome. These types of tests are becoming increasingly available to patients of all ages and for many different indications. This explosion in the number and complexity of genetic tests needs an increasing number of genetic counseling professionals who can provide accurate interpretation, risk assessment and recommendations. Licensure will ensure consistency in the professional standards of this increasing number of genetic counselors. There is no other medical professional, beyond an MD geneticist, who can provide this level of interpretation and analysis.

I strongly support SB 857. Licensing will assure that genetic counselors will go through the same rigorous credentialing process as other licensed health professionals. SB 857 will ensure that patients in Connecticut seeking genetic counseling are fully aware of the credentials and level of education and training of the individuals providing this counseling. As I observe the unremitting and explosive growth in genetic testing, even

over the past year, I am more convinced of the need for licensure now than when I previously testified almost 1 year ago.

I look forward to Connecticut joining the growing number of states nationwide that require licensure for genetic counselors. 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.

Sally S. Rosengren, M. D.