



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 4, 2021

To: The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair, House Health & Government Operations Committee

Re: Letter of Support - House Bill 299 – State Board of Physicians - Genetic Counselors - Licensing

Dear Chair Pendergrass:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on House Bill 299. Maryland hospitals ensure each person who comes through their doors receives the best possible care. HB 299 would protect Marylanders by adopting standards for genetic counselors in our state—requiring appropriate training, reputable certifications, and ongoing continuing education.

Unlike in 29 other states, there is no legal standard in Maryland to determine who can represent themselves as genetic counselors. Yet, about 220 genetic counselors lived or worked in the state in January 2020—60% in a clinical setting. Genetic counselors analyze patients' family and medical histories and counsel them as they try to make informed choices about their long-term health.

Setting standards for genetic counselors will give peace of mind to patients who base medical decisions on their guidance. It also would give Maryland the needed authority to regulate these services by preventing unqualified people from practicing and suspending or revoking licenses when necessary.

This small investment would increase access to genetic services and providers in our state and help attract more trained genetic counselors to Maryland.

Maryland hospitals are committed to improving health care for all Marylanders. This requires access to trained, qualified professionals when seeking information to make the right health care decisions for themselves and their families.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report.

For more information, please contact:
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