



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Department of Public Health  
Division of Health Professions Licensure  
**Board of Registration of Genetic Counselors**  
239 Causeway Street, Boston, MA 02114-2130

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**NOTICE OF GENETIC COUNSELOR LICENSURE**

Please be advised that new regulations of the Board of Registration of Genetic Counselors at 270 Code of Massachusetts Regulations (CMR) became effective on January 9, 2009. Beginning January 9, 2009, the Board's regulations, as well as applications and instructions for provisional and full licensure as a genetic counselor, will be available by visiting the Board's website at

[www.mass.gov/dph/boards](http://www.mass.gov/dph/boards)

Board statutes and policies, as well as other information about the Board, may also be accessed online at the above address.

The Board's enabling legislation, Chapter 170 of the Acts of 2006, AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE LICENSING OF GENETIC COUNSELORS, is a title act in that it restricts the use of the title "genetic counselor" to individuals duly licensed by the Board: "No person shall hold himself out as a genetic counselor unless he is licensed in accordance with section 230 or section 100 of chapter 13. No person who is not so licensed may use in connection with his name or place of business, the title 'genetic counselor', 'licensed genetic counselor', 'gene counselor', 'genetic consultant', 'genetic associate' or any words, letters, abbreviations or insignia indicating or implying a person holds a genetic counseling license. [exemptions omitted]" See Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L.) Chapter 112, section 232.

Because Chapter 170 of the Acts of 2006 is a title act, the practice of genetic counseling is not restricted to individuals licensed by the Board. Thus an individual may engage in the practice of genetic counseling as defined in M.G.L. c. 112, s. 227, but cannot represent himself or herself in any way as a genetic counselor or in any way imply that he or she is licensed as a genetic counselor by the Board. M.G.L. c. 112, s. 227, defines the "practice of genetic counseling" as follows:

"Practice of genetic counseling", a communication process, conducted by 1 or more appropriately trained individuals, that may include:

- (a) estimating the likelihood of occurrence or recurrence of a birth defect or of any potentially inherited or genetically influenced condition. This assessment may involve:

- (1) obtaining and analyzing a complete health history of the person and family;
  - (2) reviewing pertinent medical records;
  - (3) evaluating the risks from exposure to possible mutagens or teratogens;
  - and
  - (4) recommending genetic testing or other evaluations to diagnose a condition or determine the carrier status of 1 or more family members;
- (b) helping the individual, family, health care provider or public to:
- (1) appreciate the medical, psychological and social implications of a disorder, including its features, variability, usual course and management options;
  - (2) learn how genetic factors contribute to the disorder and affect the chance for recurrence of the condition in other family members;
  - (3) understand available options for coping with, preventing or reducing the chance of occurrence or recurrence of a condition;
  - (4) select the most appropriate, accurate and cost-effective methods of diagnosis; and
  - (5) understand genetic or prenatal tests, coordinate testing for inherited disorders, and interpret complex genetic test results; and
- (c) facilitating an individual's or family's:
- (1) exploration of the perception of risk and burden associated with the disorder;
  - (2) decision-making regarding testing or medical interventions consistent with their beliefs, goals, needs, resources, culture and ethical or moral views; and
  - (3) adjustment and adaptation to the condition or their genetic risk by addressing needs for psychological, social and medical support.

Any person who is currently engaged in the practice of genetic counseling as defined in M.G.L. c. 112, s. 227, or who intends to engage in such practice, and who wishes to use any words, letters, abbreviations, or insignia indicating or implying that he or she holds a genetic counselor license must submit to the Board a completed licensure application form available from the Board no later than **April 9, 2009** and must conform his or her practice to the requirements of Board statutes (M.G.L. c. 112, ss. 227-233) and regulations.

Please email the Board at [geneticcounselor.admin@state.ma.us](mailto:geneticcounselor.admin@state.ma.us) with any questions.