



Improving Access to Genetic Services

H.R. 2144 / S. 1450, the "Access to Genetic
Counselor Services Act"

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The Drive Towards the Triple Aim

- High Quality
 - Outcomes improve when genetic specialists deliver genetic services: Policy should allow practitioners to deliver services at the top of their scope of practice
- Reduce Cost
 - Genetic counselors help ensure the right test is ordered for the right individual
- Access
 - Missing piece
 - Genetic counselors are unique: they focus on families, not just the patient in front of them

Genetic Counselors and Medicare

- Genetic counselors do not have provider status under Medicare
- Have to follow what is known as “Incident to” rules
 - A supervising physician is required (even in states with licensure where licensees are entitled by the state to practice independently)
 - Supervising physician bills the service
 - Inefficient service delivery
 - Impedes referrals to genetic counselors

Medicare Non-Physician Practitioners

- Examples of Non-Physician Providers (NPP) currently recognized under Medicare:
 - Nurse Practitioners
 - Nurse-Midwives
 - OT/PTs
 - Speech Language Pathologists
 - Audiologists
 - Dieticians
 - Physician Assistants

H.R. 2144 / S. 1450, the “Access to Genetic Counselor Services Act” (Sponsors & Co-Sponsors)

- House bill: H.R. 2144
 - Rep. Brian Higgins (D-NY)
 - Rep. Mike Kelly (R-PA)
 - Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI)
 - Rep. Vern Buchanan (R-FL)
 - Rep. Rodney Davis (R-IL)
- Senate bill: S. 1450
 - Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT)
 - Sen. John Barrasso (R-WY)
- Over 250 organizations support

Bill Summary

- The Act provides reimbursement of services furnished by genetic counselors under part B of the Medicare program.
- Genetic counselors are those licensed by states as such, or for those in states without licensure, the Secretary of HHS will set criteria through regulation.
- Genetic counselors would be paid at 85 percent of the physician fee schedule.
- Allow telemedicine services by genetic counselor
- Other practitioners that currently provide the service will not be affected.

Medicare Modernization

- Genetic testing is an innovative and valuable healthcare service
- Genetic counselors improve the delivery of genetic testing
- The legislation should:
 - Benefit the Medicare program by providing savings
 - Increase access to genetic services for all patients, not just Medicare eligible
 - New reimbursement stream should allow more hospitals to hire genetic counselors

Proposed Assignments

- Kristen Shannon ME, NH, VT, MA, CT, RI (21 CDs)
- Heather Shappell PA, NJ (30 CDs)
- Cori Feist AK, HI, OR, WA (18 CDs)
- Amy Sturm OH, KY (22 CDs)
- Sara Reichert MD, DE, VA, WV (23 CDs)
- Gillian Hooker TN, NC (22 CDs)
- Fallon Brewer AL, GA, SC (28 CDs)
- Carolyn Haskins FL (27)
- Angie Trepanier MI, IN (23 CDs)
- Scott Weissman IL (18 CDs)
- Joy Haidle WI, IA, MN (20 CDs)
- Lori Williamson Dean OK, LA, MS, AR, MO (26 CDs)
- Bronson Riley KS, NE, SD, ND (9 CDs)
- Cori Feist AK, HI, OR, WA (18 CDs)
- **Dan Riconda TX (36 CDs)**
- Mary Freivogel CO, UT, NM, NV (27)
- Misha Raskin N.CA, ID, WY, MT (26 CDs)
- Sandra Brown S.CA, AZ (28 CDs)
- Sophia Rodriguez NY (27 CDs)

The Access to Genetic Counselor Services Act (HR 2144/S 1450)



- NSGC advocacy resources: <https://www.nsgc.org/Policy-Research-and-Publications/Federal-Advocacy>
 - Resources to Get Started
 - HR 2144 bill (S 1450)
 - Find you Congress member
 - Issue Brief
 - Organization Sign-on Letter Template
 - GC Backgrounder
 - Pandemic Issue Brief
 - Social Media Toolkit
 - Send a Letter to Your Congressional Representative
 - NSGC PAC
- HR Bill Sponsor: U.S. Rep. Brian Higgins (D-New York) - Introduced bill on 3/24/21
- SB Bill Sponsors: Sen. Jon Tester (D-Montana) and Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyoming)

Next Steps

- **Identify key NSGC members in each congressional district**
Initially 2-3 members per district (diverse region/employers)
- Send introductory email with request to be a NSGC advocate/reach out to their Members of Congress (MoC)
- &/or
- **Recruit interested Texas GC's at the TSGC Annual Conference**
- NSGC has provided resources:
 - Draft email to NSGC member
 - Draft email they can send to their MoC
 - Congressional staff contact info

Register for the NSGC 5/24-5/27 legislative meetings!

Questions?

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if you would like to be a legislative contact for Texas