GENETIC COUNSELOR FACT SHEET

HISTORY

The Minnesota Legislature enacted a law in 2016 establishing a licensure system for genetic counselors. The Board of Medical Practice is responsible for administering the law and providing information to consumers and other interested persons.

LICENSED GENETIC COUNSELOR ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Licensed Genetic Counselor Advisory Council was appointed by the Board of Medical Practice to advise the Board on issues regarding genetic counselor licensure standards, enforcement of the practice act, and complaint review. The Council is composed of five members: three genetic counselors, one licensed physician with experience in genetics and one public member.

LICENSURE

Effective January 1, 2018, no individual may practice genetic counseling unless the individual is licensed as a genetic counselor, except as otherwise provided under Chapter 147F. No individual may use the title “genetic counselor,” “licensed genetic counselor,” “gene counselor,” “genetic consultant,” “genetic assistant,” “genetic associate,” or any words, letters, abbreviations, or insignia indicating or implying that the individual is eligible for licensure by the state as a genetic counselor unless the individual has been licensed as a genetic counselor.

LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS

A. General Licensure. To be eligible for General Licensure, an applicant must submit to the Board:

(1) a completed application on forms provided by the Board along with all fees required;

(2) evidence of graduation from an education program accredited by the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC) or its predecessor or successor organization;

(3) a verified copy of a valid and current certification issued by the American Board of Genetic Counseling (ABGC) or American Board of Medical Genetics (ABMG) as a certified genetic counselor, or by the ABMG as a certified medical geneticist;

(4) additional information as requested by the Board, including any additional information necessary to ensure that the applicant is able to practice with reasonable skill and safety to the public;

(5) a signed statement verifying that the information in the application is true and correct to the best of the applicant's knowledge and belief; and

(6) a signed waiver authorizing the Board to obtain access to the applicant's records in this or any other state in which the applicant completed an educational program or engaged in the practice of genetic counseling.
B. **Licensure by Reciprocity.** To be eligible for Licensure by Reciprocity, the applicant must hold a current genetic counselor or medical geneticist registration or license in another state, the District of Columbia, or a territory of the United States and must:

1. submit the application materials and fees as required by General Licensure, items (1), (2), and (4) to (6), in addition to verification of a valid and current certification issued by the ABGC or ABMG as a certified genetic counselor, or by the ABMG as a certified medical geneticist;

2. provide verification from the appropriate government body of a current registration or license for the practice of genetic counseling in another jurisdiction; and

3. provide verification from the appropriate government body in each jurisdiction in which the applicant holds a registration or license. Each verification must state the applicant's name, date of birth, registration or license number, date of issuance, a statement regarding disciplinary actions, if any, taken against the applicant, and the terms under which the registration or license was issued.

C. **Licensure by Equivalency.** The Board may grant a license to an individual who does not meet the certification requirements for General Licensure but who has been employed as a genetic counselor for a minimum of ten years and provides the following documentation to the Board:

1. proof of a master's or higher degree in genetics or related field of study from an ACGC accredited educational institution;

2. proof that the individual has never failed the ABGC or ABMG certification examination;

3. three letters of recommendation, with at least one from an individual eligible for licensure and at least one from an individual certified as a genetic counselor by the ABGC or ABMG or an individual certified as a medical geneticist by the ABMG. An individual who submits a letter of recommendation must have worked with the applicant in an employment setting during the past ten years and must attest to the applicant's competency; and

4. documentation of the completion of 100 hours of NSGC-approved continuing education credits within the past five years.

*This license option expires January 1, 2018.*

**SCOPE OF PRACTICE**

The practice of genetic counseling by a licensed genetic counselor includes the following services:

1. obtaining and interpreting individual and family medical and developmental histories;
2. determining the mode of inheritance and the risk of transmitting genetic conditions and birth defects;
3. discussing the inheritance, features, natural history, means of diagnosis, and management of conditions with clients;
4. identifying, coordinating, ordering, and explaining the clinical implications of genetic laboratory tests and other laboratory studies;
5. assessing psychosocial factors, including social, educational, and cultural issues;
6. providing client-centered counseling and anticipatory guidance to the client or family based on their responses to the condition, risk of occurrence, or risk of recurrence;
7. facilitating informed decision-making about testing and management;
8. identifying and using community resources that provide medical, educational, financial, and psychosocial support and advocacy;
9. providing accurate written medical, genetic, and counseling information for families and health care professionals.
RESTRICTIONS ON USE

Nothing in Chapter 147F shall be construed to require a license to practice genetic counseling for:

(1) an individual employed as a genetic counselor by the federal government or a federal agency if the individual is providing services under the direction and control of the employer;

(2) a student or intern, having graduated within the past six months, or currently enrolled in an ACGC-accredited genetic counseling educational program providing genetic counseling services that are an integral part of the student's or intern's course of study, are performed under the direct supervision of a licensed genetic counselor or physician who is on duty in the assigned patient care area, and the student is identified by the title “genetic counseling intern”;

(3) a visiting ABGC- or ABMG-certified genetic counselor working as a consultant in this state who permanently resides outside of the state, or the occasional use of services from organizations from outside of the state that employ ABGC- or ABMG-certified genetic counselors. This is limited to practicing for 30 days total within one calendar year. Certified genetic counselors from outside of the state working as a consultant in this state must be licensed in their state of residence if that credential is available; or

(4) an individual who is licensed to practice medicine under Chapter 147.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

A licensed genetic counselor must complete a minimum of 25 hours of National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC)- or ABMG-approved continuing education units every two years. If a licensee's renewal term is prorated to be more or less than one year, the required number of continuing education units is prorated proportionately.

RENEWAL CYCLE

A genetic counselor license shall be valid for (at least) one year from the date of issuance.