



American Society of Human Genetics

discover. educate. advocate.

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November 26, 2018

The Honorable Erik Paulsen  
U.S. House of Representatives  
127 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Loebsack  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1527 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Paulsen and Mr. Loebsack:

On behalf of the nearly 8,000 members of the American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG), I wish to express the Society's strong support of H.R. 7083, the *Access to Genetic Counselor Services Act of 2018*. The Society knows that genetic counselors are a key part of the delivery of genetic testing in healthcare across the United States, and it is essential that their services are accessible to patients. This is especially important given the dramatic expansion of genetics and genomics for diagnostic and therapeutic benefit that is underway in medicine, health and research.

ASHG is the primary professional membership organization for human genetics specialists worldwide. The Society's membership includes researchers, academicians, clinicians, genetic counselors, laboratory practice professionals, nurses, and others who have a special interest in human genetics. Our members work in a wide range of settings, including universities, hospitals, institutes, biotech companies, the pharmaceutical industry, and medical and research laboratories. In many of these settings, ASHG members provide genetic counseling services themselves or work closely with genetic counselors, and on these matters we are very pleased to work in close and valued partnership with the National Society of Genetic Counselors.

Genetic counselors are health professionals with specialized graduate degrees and training in medical genetics, genomics, and counseling. The rapidly expanding clinical use of genetics and genomics is increasing the need for qualified genetic counselors in healthcare. Many health plans recognize genetic counselors as important members of the healthcare team and depend on them to help ensure provision of state-of-the-art genetic services, including ordering of appropriate tests and the attendant pre- and post-test counseling and education. H.R. 7083 will ensure that Medicare enrollees have access to these services.

Thank you for introducing this legislation and for your strong leadership on this issue. ASHG's Senior Director of Policy and Advocacy, Derek Scholes, will follow up with your staff to see how we might be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

David L. Nelson, PhD  
President