



Facing Hereditary Cancer EMPOWERED

February 9, 2026

RE: In strong support of HB 293

Dear Co-Chairs Fields and Hall and Esteemed Members of the House Labor & Commerce Committee,

I am writing on behalf of [FORCE](#), a leading national nonprofit organization for individuals at risk of hereditary cancer, providing trusted information, support, and advocacy to constituents in Alaska. Most of our members carry an inherited genetic mutation that significantly increases their risk of cancer.

Access to trustworthy healthcare professionals with expertise in genetics is crucial in helping members of our community make informed medical decisions. As such, we strongly support the commitment to ensuring that Alaska residents have access to high-quality counseling and testing achieved through the licensing of genetic counselors.

Genetics is a complex, rapidly growing field that affects virtually every area of medicine. Quality genetic counseling services are critical as more consumers base medical decisions, such as increased cancer screening or risk-reducing surgeries, on genetic test results. Unfortunately, the vast majority of healthcare providers have little or no training in genetics. Genetic counselors, however, have advanced degrees in medical genetics and counseling. They are uniquely trained to provide patients with information, education, counseling, advocacy, and emotional support for medical conditions that have genetic indications.

In recent years, we have filed complaints against several companies and individuals engaging in unethical or fraudulent genetic counseling and testing practices. Importantly, many of those providing “genetic counseling” had no genetics training and most had no healthcare background. Inappropriate genetic testing or misinterpretation of results can lead to serious adverse outcomes for patients, including irreversible medical decisions such as surgery. Genetic counselor licensure serves to protect patients from medical harm.

Research shows that genetic counselor licensure also helps save the healthcare system money. Genetic tests and the associated healthcare services can be costly. Nearly a quarter of all genetic tests are ordered incorrectly by clinicians who have insufficient knowledge of genetic testing.^{1,2} This includes placing orders for unwarranted, cost-ineffective, duplicate, or entirely unnecessary tests.^{1,3} Licensed genetic counselors have the expertise to guide the appropriate ordering of genetic tests, thereby minimizing wasteful spending and combating healthcare fraud and abuse.

¹ Miller *et al.* *Am J Med Genet A*. 2014. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24665052/>

² Lynch and Nouvelage. (2019 Sep 27). *Reuters*. Retrieved from: www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-fraud-genetics-idUSKBN1WC1PH

³ Berlin (2020 July). *Texas Medicine*. Retrieved from: www.texmed.org/TexasMedicineDetail.aspx?id=53946

A study published in *Science Direct* affirms that counseling with a genetics expert is very important for the successful implementation of genetic testing.⁴ Of those who had a pre-test discussion, those with a certified counselor were more likely to recall important information about having a pedigree drawn, laws protecting against discrimination by health insurers, and issues related to life and disability insurance. Additionally, those with a certified genetics counselor were more likely to get the appropriate guideline-recommended testing.

National medical guidelines recommend genetic counseling before and after genetic testing. Currently, Alaska lacks a legal definition of who may use the title of Genetic Counselor. Licensure is an important mechanism to help consumers and healthcare providers identify appropriately trained and qualified genetic counseling professionals. Supporting HB 293 will benefit patients by facilitating access to the most current, evidence-based information and care.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this crucial issue.

Sincerely,

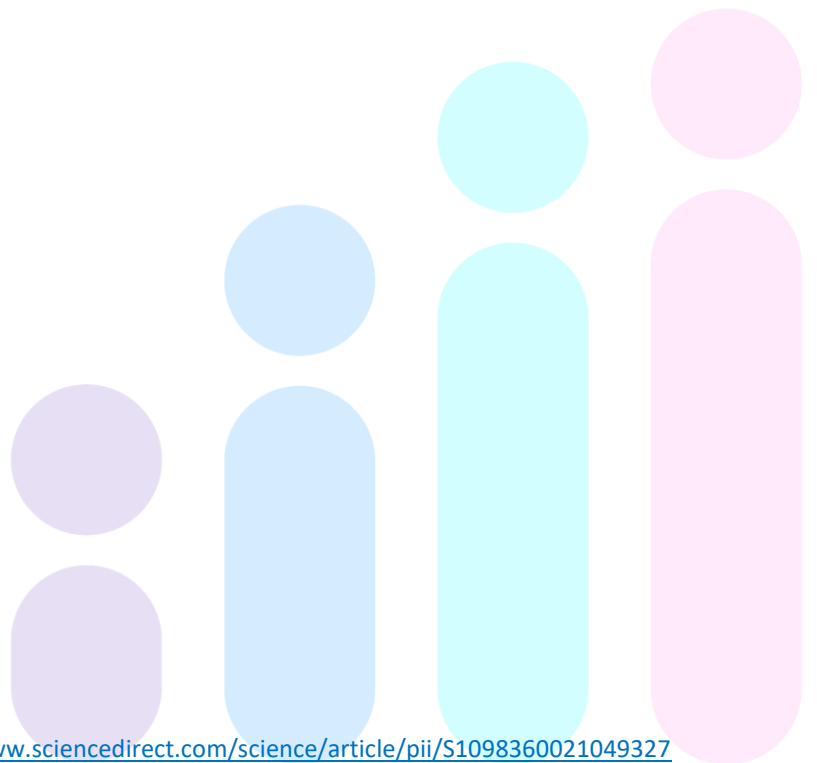


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FORCE: Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered

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⁴ Genetics in Medicine, Volume 17, Issue 1, 2015. www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1098360021049327