

James Barber DO
Medical Director Maternal Fetal Medicine
Providence Alaska Medical Group
Anchorage, Alaska
James.barber@providence.org
February 2, 2026

Re: Support for Licensure of Master's-Prepared Genetic Counselors in Alaska

Dear Representative,

I am writing to express my strong support for the licensure of **genetic counselors who hold accredited Master's degrees** in the State of Alaska. As one of only a few practicing Maternal Fetal Medicine physicians in Alaska, I have seen firsthand the growing importance of genetic counseling in modern medical care and the significant barriers Alaskans face in accessing these essential services.

Genetic counselors are highly trained healthcare professionals who complete rigorous Master's-level education, extensive clinical training, and national board certification. They play a critical role in helping patients and families understand genetic risks, navigate complex testing decisions, and interpret results in a clinically meaningful and ethically sound manner. Their work supports physicians across many specialties, including primary care, oncology, obstetrics, pediatrics, cardiology, and rare disease management.

Alaska's unique geography and workforce challenges make licensure particularly important. Many communities—especially rural and Tribal communities—have limited or no access to genetic services. Licensure would allow qualified genetic counselors to practice to the full extent of their training, including through telehealth, thereby improving access to timely, culturally appropriate, and cost-effective care for Alaskans across the state.

Without a clear licensure pathway, Alaska risks:

- Losing qualified genetic counselors to other states with established licensure,
- Limiting patient access to medically necessary genetic services,
- Increasing delays in diagnosis and care, and
- Placing unnecessary administrative burdens on physicians and healthcare systems.

Licensure would also establish **appropriate standards of practice, consumer protections, and professional accountability**, ensuring that Alaskans receive high-quality care from properly trained and credentialed providers. Importantly, licensure does not expand scope beyond established

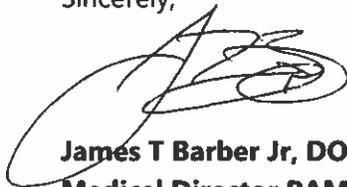
national standards; rather, it formalizes and regulates a profession that is already integral to modern healthcare delivery.

As medical care becomes increasingly personalized and genetics-driven, the demand for genetic counseling will continue to grow. Establishing licensure for Master's-prepared genetic counselors is a practical, evidence-based step that aligns Alaska with the majority of other states and supports a strong, sustainable healthcare workforce.

I respectfully urge you to support legislation or regulatory action that enables the licensure of genetic counselors in Alaska. Doing so will improve access to care, enhance patient safety, and strengthen our healthcare system for the benefit of all Alaskans.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to provide additional perspective or answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James T Barber Jr.', written over a circular scribble.

James T Barber Jr, DO
Medical Director PAMG Maternal Feal Medicine
Anchorage, Alaska