

SENATE BILL NO. 2131

Introduced by

Senators J. Lee, Berry, Mathern

Representatives Hofstad, Weisz, Hogan

1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new chapter to title 43 of the North Dakota Century
2 Code, relating to genetic counseling; and to provide a penalty.

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

4 **SECTION 1.** A new chapter to title 43 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and
5 enacted as follows:

6 **Definitions.**

7 In this chapter:

8 1. "ABGC" means the American board of genetic counseling.

9 2. "ABMG" means the American board of medical genetics.

10 3. "Board" means the state board of medical examiners.

11 4. "Genetic counseling" means a communication process, conducted by appropriately
12 trained individuals which includes:

13 a. Assisting an individual, the individual's family, a health care provider, or the public
14 with comprehending the issues inherent to genetic counseling. Such assistance
15 may include:

16 (1) Appreciating the medical, psychological, and social implications of a
17 disorder, including features, variability, usual course, and management
18 options;

19 (2) Learning how genetic factors contribute to the disorder and affect the
20 chance for recurrence of the condition in other family members;

21 (3) Understanding available options for coping with, preventing, or reducing the
22 chance of occurrence or recurrence of a condition;

23 (4) Selecting the most appropriate, accurate, and cost-effective methods to
24 determine risk for genetic conditions and diseases; and

- 1 (5) Understanding genetic tests, including diagnostic genetic tests, screening
2 tests, or predispositional genetic tests; coordinating testing for inherited
3 disorders; and explaining complex genetic test results;
- 4 b. Assessing the likelihood of the occurrence or recurrence of an abnormality in the
5 pregnancy in structure, function, or metabolism or of any potentially inherited or
6 genetically influenced condition. Such assessment may include the following:
- 7 (1) Obtaining and analyzing a complete health history of an individual and the
8 individual's family;
- 9 (2) Reviewing pertinent medical records;
- 10 (3) Evaluating the risks from exposure to possible mutagens or teratogens; and
- 11 (4) Discussing genetic testing or other evaluations to identify a condition or
12 determine the carrier status of one or more family members; and
- 13 c. Facilitating an individual's or family's:
- 14 (1) Exploration of the perception of risk and burden associated with a genetic
15 disorder;
- 16 (2) Decisionmaking regarding testing or medical interventions consistent with
17 the individual's or family's beliefs, goals, needs, or resources or with the
18 individual's or family's cultural, ethical, or moral views; and
- 19 (3) Adjustment and adaptation to the condition or the genetic risk by addressing
20 needs for psychological, social, and medical support.
- 21 5. "Genetic counselor" means an individual licensed under this chapter to engage in the
22 practice of genetic counseling.
- 23 6. "Supervision" means ongoing direct clinical review for the purposes of training or
24 teaching, by a supervisor approved by the board who monitors the performance or an
25 individual's supervised interaction with a client and provides regular documented
26 face-to-face consultation, guidance, and instructions with respect to the clinical skills
27 and competencies of the supervised individual. This supervision may be by personal
28 contact or indirect contact by telecommunication.
- 29 **Practice of genetic counseling - Exemptions.**
- 30 1. A person may not engage in the practice of genetic counseling, act or represent to be
31 a genetic counselor, or use such titles as genetic counselor, licensed genetic

1 counselor, gene counselor, genetic associate, or any words, letters, abbreviations, or
2 insignia, such as certified genetic counselor or CGC, indicating or implying that person
3 is a genetic counselor, unless the person is an individual who holds a license or
4 temporary license issued by the board under this chapter and otherwise complies with
5 the provisions of this chapter. An individual who is exempt from the licensure
6 requirements of this chapter may not use a title indicating or implying the individual is
7 a genetic counselor.

8 2. The following individuals may engage in the practice of genetic counseling without
9 being licensed under this chapter:

- 10 a. A licensed health care professional practicing within the professional's scope of
11 practice;
12 b. A student or intern from a board-recognized school;
13 c. An individual trained as a Ph.D. medical geneticist;
14 d. A consultant from another state who is board-certified by the ABGC or the ABMG,
15 for the limited purpose of consulting with a genetic counselor; and
16 e. An employee of the state department of health in the provision of education
17 regarding single gene conditions, including sickle cell, cystic fibrosis, and
18 hemoglobinopathies.

19 **Application for licensure.**

20 1. An applicant for licensure under this chapter shall pay any filing fee and file an
21 application, on forms provided by the board, to the satisfaction of the board that the
22 applicant is of good moral character and satisfies all of the requirements of this
23 chapter, including:

24 a. Education at one of the following levels:

- 25 (1) Master of science degree from a genetic counseling training program that is
26 accredited by the ABGC or an ABGC-approved equivalent organization and
27 approved by the board; or
28 (2) Doctoral degree from a medical genetics training program that is accredited
29 by the ABMG and approved by the board; and

- 1 b. Successful completion of all requirements of the certification examination within a
2 period not to exceed four years from initial examination to successful completion
3 and with no more than three attempts;
- 4 c. Physical, mental, and professional capability for the practice of genetic
5 counseling in a manner acceptable to the board; and
- 6 d. A history free of any finding by the board, by any other state licensing board, or
7 by any court of competent jurisdiction which would constitute grounds for
8 disciplinary action under this chapter. The board may modify this restriction for
9 cause.
- 10 2. In compliance with chapter 43-17, the board may refuse to grant a license under this
11 chapter if any of the license requirements are not met.

12 **Temporary license.**

- 13 1. The board may issue a temporary license to an applicant who pays the temporary
14 license fee and meets all the qualifications for licensure, except the successful
15 completion of the certification examination if the applicant submits evidence to the
16 board that the applicant is a candidate accepted to write the certification examination.
- 17 2. A temporary licensee shall take the certification examination within eighteen months of
18 obtaining the temporary license. If a temporary licensee fails the first sitting of the
19 certification examination or the temporary license expires, the temporary licensee may
20 reapply for another temporary license. A temporary license may not be issued or
21 reissued if the applicant failed the certification examination three times.
- 22 3. A temporary license expires on the occurrence of the following:
 - 23 a. Issuance of a regular license;
 - 24 b. Failure to pass the board-approved examination; or
 - 25 c. Expiration of the term for which the temporary license was issued.
- 26 4. A temporary licensee's practice is limited to practice under the supervision of a
27 licensed genetic counselor or under the supervision of a physician approved by the
28 board if that physician has a current ABMG certification in clinical genetics.

29 **License renewal.**

30 A license issued under this chapter must be renewed annually on a date designated by the
31 board. The board shall renew a license upon payment of the renewal fee, submission of a

1 renewal application in a form approved by the board, and submission of evidence satisfactory to
2 the board of the applicant's current certification by the ABGC or ABMG.

3 **Board duties.**

4 The board shall adopt rules pertaining to fees, licensure, investigations, and disciplinary
5 proceedings.

6 **Disciplinary actions.**

- 7 1. The board may cancel, revoke, suspend, or restrict the license of a genetic counselor;
8 may issue public reprimands; and may issue fines, not to exceed one thousand
9 dollars, if the board is satisfied by proof by a preponderance of the evidence, in
10 compliance with chapter 43-17, of any of the following grounds for disciplinary action:
- 11 a. The use of any false, fraudulent, or forged statement or document or the use of
12 any fraudulent, deceitful, dishonest, or immoral practice in connection with any of
13 the licensing requirements.
 - 14 b. The making of false or misleading statements by a genetic counselor about the
15 counselor's skill.
 - 16 c. The conviction of any misdemeanor determined by the board to have a direct
17 bearing upon the genetic counselor's ability to serve the public as a practitioner of
18 genetic counseling.
 - 19 d. The conviction of a felony, if the requirements of section 12.1-33-02.1 are met.
 - 20 e. Habitual use of alcohol or drugs.
 - 21 f. Physical or mental disability materially affecting the ability to perform the duties of
22 a genetic counselor in a competent manner.
 - 23 g. The performance of any dishonorable, unethical, or unprofessional conduct likely
24 to deceive, defraud, or harm the public.
 - 25 h. Obtaining any fee by fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation.
 - 26 i. Aiding or abetting the practice of genetic counseling by an unlicensed,
27 incompetent, or impaired person.
 - 28 j. The violation of any provision of this chapter or the rules adopted by the board or
29 the violation of any action, stipulation, condition, or agreement imposed by the
30 board or the board's investigative panels.
 - 31 k. The practice of genetic counseling under a false or assumed name.

- 1 l. The advertising for the practice of genetic counseling in an untrue or deceptive
2 manner.
- 3 m. The willful or negligent violation of the confidentiality between genetic counselor
4 and patient, except as required by law.
- 5 n. Gross negligence in the practice of genetic counseling.
- 6 o. Sexual abuse, misconduct, or exploitation related to the genetic counselor's
7 practice of genetic counseling.
- 8 p. The use of any false, fraudulent, or deceptive statement in any document
9 connected with the practice of genetic counseling.
- 10 q. The imposition by another state or jurisdiction of disciplinary action against a
11 license or other authorization to practice genetic counseling based upon acts or
12 conduct by the genetic counselor which would constitute grounds for disciplinary
13 action as set forth in this section. A certified copy of the record of the action taken
14 by the other state or jurisdiction is conclusive evidence of that action.
- 15 r. The failure to furnish the board or the board's investigative panel or the board's or
16 investigative panel's investigators or representatives information legally
17 requested by the board or the investigative panel.
- 18 2. The board shall keep a record of all the board's proceedings in the matter of
19 suspending, revoking, or refusing licenses together with the evidence offered.
- 20 3. The board shall deposit in the general fund any fines collected under this section.

21 **Reinstatement and renewal.**

22 Upon application, the board may reinstate or renew a license of an applicant whose license
23 has been canceled, suspended, or revoked. The board may establish the protocol for
24 reinstatement and renewal under this section and may impose conditions for reinstatement and
25 renewal.

26 **Genetic counselor advisory committee.**

- 27 1. The board shall appoint a genetic counselor advisory committee composed of at least
28 one genetic counselor and at least two physicians licensed under chapter 43-17.
29 Except for initial appointments, each committee member shall serve a term of three
30 years. The term of initial appointees must be staggered so that expiration of terms is
31 evenly distributed. A committee member may not be appointed to more than three

- 1 consecutive full terms. If a vacancy occurs, the board shall appoint an individual to fill
2 the unexpired term.
- 3 2. The advisory committee shall meet as necessary to conduct business, but at least
4 annually. The advisory committee shall make recommendations to the board regarding
5 board rules adopted under this chapter.
- 6 **Penalty.**
- 7 It is a class B misdemeanor to knowingly violate this chapter.