

## HB 1040 – State Board of Physicians - Genetic Counselors - Licensing

**Position: *Support***

### **Bill Summary**

HB 1040 would create a separate licensure category under the Board of Physicians for genetic counselors and, after October 1, 2022, an individual would be required to be licensed by the Board before practicing genetic counseling in the state. Applicants for licensure would have to submit, among other requirements, evidence of certification by a national certifying board or national accrediting council. The bill also establishes a Genetic Counseling Advisory Committee within the Board and continuing education requirements.

### **MedStar Health's Position**

Genetic counselors are health care professionals with specialized graduate degrees and training in medical genetics, genomics, and counseling. Genetic counselors guide and support individuals and families who are looking for information about how inherited diseases and conditions might affect them. In medical settings, genetic counselors often are members of a health care team, but their training and expertise allow independent interaction with patients. The interpretation of genetic testing is often complex, and individuals should have the means to identify qualified practitioners who can interpret and explain genetic tests so that appropriate health care decisions, including referrals to other medical specialists, can be made.

The goal of licensure is to ensure that the licensees have the minimal degree of competency necessary to ensure the public health, safety, and/or welfare are protected. To date, 25 states have adopted a licensure process for certified genetic counselors. The role of genomics in health care decisions is expanding and will increase the demand for qualified genetics professionals.

For the above reasons, we urge a FAVORABLE report on HB 1040.