

MDCSCO

MARYLAND/DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
SOCIETY OF CLINICAL ONCOLOGY

January 12, 2021

Delegate Shane Pendergrass
Chair
House Health & Government Operations Committee
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: *SUPPORT: House Bill 299: State Board of Physicians – Genetic Counselors - Licensing*

Dear Delegate Shane Pendergrass and Members of the House Health & Government Operations Committee:

On behalf of the Maryland/District of Columbia Society of Clinical Oncology (MDCSCO), I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments on House Bill 299 : *State Board of Physicians – Genetic Counselors – Licensing*. House Bill 299 would require individuals that undertake the “practice of genetic counseling” to be licensed under the Maryland Board of Physicians. As the President of MDCSCO, I am committed, along with our members, to furthering our mission, which is:

1. To improve the quality and delivery of care in medical oncology in the State of Maryland and the District of Columbia.
2. To promote appropriate standards of care in oncology.
3. To cooperate with investigators conducting cancer research.
4. To assist in the continuing education of oncologists.
5. To educate the public, the government, insurance carriers, and other health care providers about appropriate prevention of cancer and current therapeutic options for patients with cancer.

We believe that this House Bill 299 aligns with this mission and we request your support for this bill. Genetic testing has become an integral part of cancer risk assessment and management. Given that as much as 10% of all cancers are hereditary, the earlier identification of individuals before a diagnosis of cancer allows for optimal surveillance and early detection and

prevention of cancer. Counseling involves evaluating a detailed family history, educating the patient about inheritance, and providing general information on cancer genetics. Appropriate training ensures that individuals will have the necessary knowledge in cancer genetics, screening, and preventive oncology. MDCSCO would be supportive of amending the bill to add clarifying language that would specify that in the course of providing genetic counseling, if the counselor were to find any indication of a disease or condition that requires diagnosis and treatment, the counselor would be required to refer the client to a licensed physician or other appropriate health care practitioner.

I thank you in advance for your time and I look forward to working with you during the 2021 Session.

Sincerely,



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