



American College of Medical Genetics
Medical Genetics: Translating Genes Into Health™

April 9, 2008

The Honorable Linda Lingle
Governor, State of Hawai'i
Executive Chambers
State Capital
Honolulu, HI 96813
[808-586-0006 fax]

Dear Governor Lingle,

The American College of Medical Genetics represents the Medical Geneticists in the United States who are certified by the American Board of Medical Genetics, a body that is recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties as the 24th primary board of medicine. The College believes that the enactment of S.B. No. 1805, "A Bill for an Act Relating to Genetic Counselors", would have the laudable effect of protecting Hawaii's citizens by providing requirements for the licensure of genetic counselors. Unfortunately, however, as currently written, it would disenfranchise and prevent from the practice of their profession doctoral level geneticists who are certified as PhD Medical Geneticists or PhDs who are certified in Clinical Cytogenetics, Molecular Genetics and Biochemical Genetics. This is particularly surprising since, in section 2-5, numerous other practitioners, including nurses and social workers, with considerably less training and experience in medical genetics are exempted from the licensing rule, while PhD geneticists are not. In the interest of both the qualified PhD geneticists, and the citizens of Hawaii who benefit from their services, we strongly believe that this bill must be amended to acknowledge those practitioners. Until such time, the College cannot support it.

Further, we also would note that, prior to 1992 all genetic counselors in the United States were certified by the American Board of Medical Genetics. At that time, the genetics organizations created the American Board of Genetic

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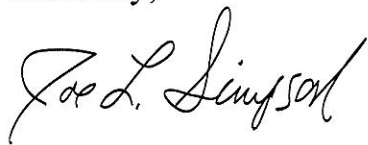
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Counseling to assume the genetic counselor certification responsibilities of the ABMG. Accordingly, there are a number of practicing genetic counselors in the US who were board certified by ABMG. Hence, certification in genetic counseling by the ABMG should be added as an option for licensure requirement (1).

While we are generally supportive of any efforts to establish a mechanism for licensure of genetic counselors, we believe that it is inappropriate and disadvantageous for the citizens of Hawaii to disenfranchise a subset of those who are specifically trained and experienced in genetic counseling.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joe L. Simpson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Joe Leigh Simpson, MD
President