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December 10, 2018

The Honorable Erik Paulsen
U.S. House of Representatives
127 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Loebsack
U.S. House of Representatives
1527 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Sent electronically to: andy.franke@mail.house.gov; will.collier@mail.house.gov

Re: H.R. 7083 – Access to Genetic Counselor Services Act of 2018

Dear Representatives Paulsen and Loebsack:

The American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics (ACMG) is writing to express our support for H.R. 7083, the *Access to Genetic Counselor Services Act of 2018*. Increasing patient access to genetic counselors is crucial, and recognition by Medicare of certified genetic counselors practicing within the appropriate scope of practice is an important step in this process.

ACMG is the only nationally recognized professional membership organization dedicated to improving health through the practice of medical genetics and genomics. Our membership includes over 2000 genetics professionals, nearly 80% of whom are board-certified clinical and laboratory geneticists and genetic counselors. With the rapid increase in knowledge about the relationships between genetics and disease that has developed over the past couple decades, genetic services have become increasingly more complex and require a unique combination of counseling skills and medical knowledge. Genetic services are provided by various types of health professionals, and genetic counselors have played and will continue to play a crucial role in the provision of some of these services.

Access to genetic counselor services continues to be restricted by lack of recognition by Medicare. Many health plans already recognize genetic counselors as an important member of the healthcare team and the role they have in working with patients and their physicians. Passage of H.R. 7083 will improve access to genetic counselor services for Medicare beneficiaries and will enable genetic counselors to be more readily available to consult with physicians. In general, ACMG supports efforts to improve patient access to genetic counselors for services provided within their appropriate scope of practice. However, services such as ordering of genetic tests, establishing a genetic diagnosis, and medical management of patients with genetic disorders are considered the practice of medicine and should be provided only by practitioners specifically licensed to engage in such medical practices. ACMG already encourages states to carefully consider these differences when establishing licensure programs, and if H.R. 7083 is passed, we encourage the Secretary to limit the performance of medical practices to such licensed practitioners.

ACMG appreciates your interest in medical genetics and your leadership in ensuring access to genetic counseling services.

Sincerely,

Louanne Hudgins

Louanne Hudgins, MD, FACMG
President