

Florida announces law requiring licenses for genetic counselors



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Florida recently added a new requirement for genetic counselors to obtain a license in order to perform genetic counseling services in the state, known as the Genetic Counseling Workforce Act. Through this law Florida has become one of a number of states in recent years to enact similar genetic counseling requirements, a trend that is expected to continue. According to the [National Society of Genetic Counselors](#), 28 states currently require genetic counselors to obtain licenses while an additional 15 are in the “progress” phase and 5 are in the “rulemaking” phase. As a result, companies in the business of employing genetic counselors or providing genetic counseling services should continue to monitor progress in this field in every state in which they provide these services.

Florida companies employing genetic counselors should take note of the activities that Genetic Counseling Workforce Act licensure permits along with the requirements for submitting a license application. The following is a brief overview of the new law’s objectives, licensure procedures, and other considerations:

Permitted Activities

Under the new law, licensed genetics counselors will be permitted to determine genetic risk for patients and their families, discuss the genetic diagnosis process, and coordinate laboratory tests and other diagnostic studies requires for a thorough genetic assessment. In addition, genetic counselors will be able to utilize and recommend financial and educational resources to patients, provide written documentation

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of genetic assessments for families and other medical professionals, and refer patients to a physician for diagnosis and treatment as needed.

License Application Procedure

Additionally, genetics counselors applying for a license will be required to provide a completed application along with documentation of having earned certain educational or accreditation and certification requirements.

Additional Considerations and Exemptions

The new law also identifies two licensure exemptions, including for “commissioned medical officers of the United States Armed Forces or the United States Public Health Service while on active duty or while acting within the scope of their military or public health responsibilities,” and certain health care practitioners practices within their scope of practice. In addition, there is a “conscience clause” allowing genetic counselors to abstain from services conflicting with deeply held moral or religious beliefs.

For additional information regarding the new Florida law, please contact one of the attorneys listed below.



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