

January 26, 2012

Dear State Genetic Counselor Licensure Boards/Offices,

We would like to update you about three policy changes in how the American Board of Genetic Counseling (ABGC) operates that may directly impact licensure in your state depending on specific language in the licensure bill or rules.

1. Some states have language in their bills or rules that indicate that licensed genetic counselors must obtain continuing education units (CEUs) that are “approved by the American Counseling Association or the American Board of Genetic Counselors.” The ABGC no longer provides approval of genetic counseling CEUs through the American Counseling Association. As of April 1, 2008, the National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC) provides this service to the genetic counseling community through the International Association for Continuing Education and Training.
2. Since 2009, ABGC has offered the certification examination on an annual basis. In addition, ABGC now allows (but does not require) individuals to take the certification examination during the same year in which they graduate. As a result, some individuals are able to take the exam within 6-8 weeks after graduation (currently, the last day to apply for the exam is July 1 and the exam window opens mid-August). We are aware of at least one state with licensure language that requires genetic counselors with temporary licenses to sit for the “next available examination.” Since licensure was only offered every 2-3 years in the past, it is possible that they did not intend to require students to take the exam within weeks of graduation.
3. We are aware that some states have language in their bills or rules that indicate that in order to obtain a license, genetic counselors “must have graduated from/or present a transcript from a genetic counseling program accredited by ABGC or the American Board of Medical Genetics (ABMG).” ABGC is working toward separation of our certification services and our graduate training program accreditation services. This is a requirement of the National Commission for Certifying Agencies. This will necessitate the creation of a new organization to provide accreditation of the genetic counseling training programs which we expect to see within the next few years. This new organization will have a different name than ABGC.

The NSGC is aware of these issues and the model language provided for all state licensure bills indicates that CEUs can come from ABGC or an ABGC-approved/equivalent organization. In addition, the current model language indicates that genetic counselors must have graduated from a genetic counseling training program accredited by ABGC or an ABGC-approved/

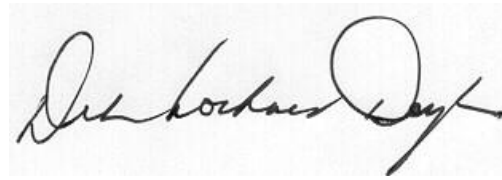
equivalent organization. We would suggest using language like this if you decide to update your state's licensure bill or rules.

We believe it is our responsibility to notify the State Licensing Boards/Offices for all states with licensure for Genetic Counselors regarding these changes. We recognize that some of these changes might require changes to your state's rules or perhaps even to your state's legislation which can be costly, and time-consuming. We encourage you to review the language in your state's bill and rules and identify whether any of these issues warrant further action. Please do not hesitate to contact our office should you have further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erynn Gordon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Erynn Gordon, MS, CGC
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Debra Lochner Doyle". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Debra Lochner Doyle, MS, CGC
Credentials Committee Chair