

Ana Morales Shares Her Vision for ABGC in 2019

On behalf of ABGC, I would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year! I am excited to serve as ABGC's President this year and look forward to a year marked by execution, leadership, collaboration, and a continued pursuit of excellence.



Execution. Implementation of the ABGC initiatives that have been planned over the last couple of years will culminate in the role we are taking in 2019 to bring added value to you, our Diplomates. Some of these initiatives include:

- Leadership Academy – developing genetic counselor leaders, inspiring them to identify opportunities to serve our profession, including ABGC.
- Media and Communications Committee – creating a strong presence for ABGC in the media, communicating what the board is doing, and educating the public about what being a certified genetic counselor means.
- Research Committee – funding studies that will generate the data that we need to prove our value to help us advance.
- Task Force on Recertification – evaluating our process for maintenance of competence, ensuring that Diplomates' skills remain current.

Proper execution depends on leadership, which in turn is about raising others in their own way to success. I look forward to providing the groups that will lead these initiatives with the guidance and support they need to achieve results.

Leadership. Speaking of leadership, I would like to share with you a few thoughts on how I see leadership in our field. I invite everyone to listen to this Podcast, recorded at the National Society of Genetic Counselors 37th Annual Conference and published on iTunes <https://apple.co/2rPiK9T>. You will find my five-minute discussion, "Importance of Taking on Leadership Roles," with outgoing Certification Exam Committee (CEC) chair Kara Bui, MS, CGC, starting at 18:15.

We are all leaders because we are certified genetic counselors (CGCs), practicing a relatively new profession that is still evolving, and whose popularity among consumers has skyrocketed in the past year. There were an estimated 25+ million users who have participated in direct-to-consumer testing. More general public awareness is needed to showcase how seeing a CGC can help navigate this new terrain. A simple example of showing leadership is when you introduce yourself, either professionally, or socially. In this setting, chances are you have to take the time to explain what is a genetic counselor. That single conversation generates a better understanding of our profession, and by virtue of educating one new person about what we do, you are exhibiting leadership behavior.

Collaboration. Our individual actions are essential, but let's remember the genetic counseling leadership organizations that are carrying unique missions required to sustain our profession. Promoting collaboration with our sister organizations will thus be another key goal for 2019. For example, supporting the passage of the Access to Genetic Counselor Services Act of 2018 - H.R. 7083 is a high priority for ABGC. The impact that this bill will have on our field could become one of the biggest accomplishments since the inception of our organization 25 years ago. With the tremendous public awareness of the new direct-to-consumer testing, this bill is more important than ever. Working together to have genetic counselors be recognized as Medicare providers is just one example of how ABGC is committed to collaborating to elevate our field. The genetic counseling sister organizations hold quarterly leadership calls, and I look forward to any shared strategies emerging from those important conversations.

Continued pursuit of excellence. Finally, elevating our field requires a concentrated commitment for our main product: a rigorous certification and recertification process. At the core of ABGC, our CEC will begin a new cycle of writing questions that ensure minimal competence to enter the field, and I am committed to a fair and smooth certification and recertification process. We will also spend time in 2019 assessing our current recertification activities to validate CGCs continued competence in our ever-changing field. We are also conducting a research study on the value of certification for genetic counselors. This data will not only translate into concrete tools that we could use to advance our mission but also for you to advance in your career.

So, cheers to a New Year and let's get to work!