



The Genetic Counselor Workforce Working Group (WFWG) commissioned Dobson I DaVanzo & Associates, LLC to conduct a workforce supply and demand study of United States-based certified genetic counselors over the next decade (2017-2026). The WFWG includes the following organizations: Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC), American Board of Genetic Counselors (ABGC), American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG), Association of Genetic Counseling Program Directors (AGCPD), and National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC).

The genetic counselor workforce has grown by 88 percent from 2006-2016, and the study identifies additional growth of 72 percent over the next decade. The study focused on calculating the supply and demand for genetic counselors delivering care directly to patients in a variety of settings. The data indicate a shortage of genetic counselors engaged in direct patient care. Assuming demand of one genetic counselor per 100,000 people in the United States, supply is expected to reach equilibrium in 2023 or 2024. If the demand assumption is based on one genetic counselor per 75,000 people, then equilibrium is not reached until 2029-2030.

The study provides data and context for the next steps of the WFWG's efforts. Some of the work may involve:

- Conducting additional research to assess whether one genetic counselor per 100,000 or 75,000 people is appropriate to meet demand in the clinical setting.
- Expanding existing training programs and developing new programs. The pipeline of applicants to training programs has remained strong and hundreds of qualified individuals are turned away each year. Activities around this initiative will be focused on accelerating growth, while being mindful of not overreaching and exceeding demand.
- Continuing efforts to draw highly-qualified individuals to the profession while making additional strides in attracting individuals from underrepresented groups.
- Ensuring a supply of genetic counselors involved in education as the base of trainees grows. The study indicates a shortage in this subset of genetic counselors.
- Examining factors that create a “substitution effect” (i.e., other healthcare providers providing genetic counseling to patients) and how that impacts quality of care, patient outcomes, and demand for genetic counselor services.
- Identifying and integrating tools that increase efficiency and productivity of genetic counselors in clinical practice.
- Identifying the demand for genetic counselors outside direct patient care settings.

Leaders within the organizations represented in the WFWG are engaged in developing collaborative strategies that will address the workforce challenges in the coming months and years. These strategies may involve collaboration with both public and private entities.