

**State of New Hampshire
Office of Licensed Allied Health Board
Genetic Counselors Governing Board**

**Philbrook Building, 121 South Fruit Street
Concord, New Hampshire**

DECLARATORY RULING

On July 17, 2017, the Genetic Counselors Governing Board (“the Board”) received a letter from Jillian Ozmore, MS, LGC. In her letter, Ms. Ozmore requested a declaratory ruling from the Board as to whether ordering genetic tests falls under the scope of practice of licensed genetic counselors. Ms. Ozmore stated that the American Board of Genetic Counseling has put forth a scope of practice stating that ordering genetic tests is within the scope of practice for genetic counselors.

The scope of practice for genetic counselors is set forth in RSA 326-K:1, VI. This statute defines the “practice of genetic counseling” as:

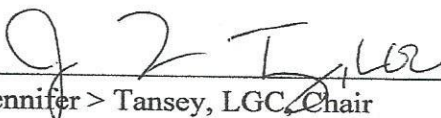
- “VI. Practice of genetic counseling” means, for the purposes of advising an individual client, a client’s family, or other licensed health care professionals:
- (a) Obtaining and evaluating individual, family, and medical histories to determine genetic risk for genetic or medical conditions and diseases in a patient, his or her offspring, and other family members;
 - (b) Discussing the features, natural history, means of diagnosis, genetic and environmental factors, and management of risk for genetic or medical conditions and diseases;
 - (c) Identifying and coordinating genetic laboratory tests and other diagnostic studies as appropriate for the genetic assessment;
 - (d) Integrating genetic laboratory test results and other diagnostic studies with personal and family medical history to assess and communicate risk factors for genetic or medical conditions and diseases;
 - (e) Explaining the clinical implications of genetic laboratory tests and other diagnostic studies and their results;
 - (f) Evaluating the client’s or family’s responses to the condition or risk of recurrence and provide client-centered counseling and anticipatory guidance; and
 - (g) Providing written documentation of medical, genetic, and counseling information for families and health care professionals.”

It is clear from the statute that genetic counselors may “[i]dentify and coordinate genetic laboratory tests and other diagnostic studies as appropriate for the genetic assessment.” See RSA 326-K:1, VI. The question posed by this request for a declaratory ruling, then, is whether genetic counselors may order these tests.

The Board determines that ordering genetic laboratory tests is within the scope of practice for genetic counselors. Genetic counselors have the authority to identify which genetic laboratory tests, if any, are appropriate for a given patient. See RSA 326-K:1, VI(c). Genetic counselors also have the authority to coordinate the genetic laboratory tests appropriately. See id. In “coordinating” genetic tests, genetic counselors have broad authority and responsibilities. Counselors must consult with the patients as to the times they would be available for the laboratory tests, consult with the laboratory technicians who will be performing the tests, and work with the rest of the medical team throughout the process. As the member of the medical team charged with “coordinating” the genetic laboratory tests, then, the genetic counselor has the authority to order such tests.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD

Date 10/09/2017


Jennifer > Tansey, LGC Chair
Authorized Representative of the
NH Genetic Counselors Governing Board