



Provision of Quality Genetic Services and Care: Building a Multidisciplinary, Collaborative Approach among Genetic Nurses and Genetic Counselors

(Approved: November 1, 2006)

Background

The National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC) and the International Society of Nurses in Genetics (ISONG) are two genetics professional organizations that strive to address the needs of their members in providing genetic services within the healthcare system. Both organizations work toward improving appropriate access to quality genetic services for the benefit of individuals, families and communities affected with and/or at risk for genetic conditions 1, 2.

Genetic counselors are health professionals with specialized education, training and experience in medical genetics and counseling who help people understand and adapt to the implications of genetic contributions to disease 3, 4. Genetic nurses have specialized education and training in genetics in addition to generic training in healthcare practice with the goal of caring for people's genetic and genomic health 5. Genetic counselors and genetic nurses are accustomed to working as members of multidisciplinary healthcare teams 1, 6. There is a need for close collaboration between NSGC and ISONG in order to meet the needs of individuals, families, and communities as genetics and genomic medicine become more integral to all of healthcare.

It is the position of ISONG and NSGC that both organizations will, together, promote a multidisciplinary and collaborative approach to enhance the quality of genetic services and care by:

- respecting and valuing the knowledge, perspectives, contributions, and areas of competence of colleagues and collaborating with them to provide the highest quality of services;
- advocating for genetic counseling services to be provided by appropriately trained, qualified, and competent genetics professionals to protect the public;

- collaborating with multidisciplinary research teams to develop effective, high-quality, evidence-based approaches to genetic services including prevention, screening, diagnostics, prognostics, selection of treatment, monitoring of treatment effectiveness, and in providing psychosocial support;
- educating health care professionals, insurers, educators, legislators, public health officials, colleagues, and the public regarding the expanding role of genetics and genomics as integral components in the promotion of the public's health and well-being.

Summary

The National Society of Genetic Counselors and the International Society of Nurses in Genetics, Inc. recognize that the central focus of each of their practices is to support their members in providing the highest quality, evidence-based genetic services and care to individuals, families and communities. Toward that common aim, both organizations will embrace opportunities to collaborate in research, education, and the provision of multidisciplinary care including collaboration with other healthcare providers, insurers, public health officials, legislators, international colleagues, and the public.

References

1. National Society of Genetic Counselors (1991) Position Statement: Access to Care.
<http://www.nsgc.org/about/position.cfm#Access>
2. International Society of Nurses in Genetics (2003). Position Statement: Access to Genomic Healthcare: The Role of Nursing.
3. National Society of Genetic Counselors (2006). FAQs about Genetic Counselors and the NSGC.
www.nsgc.org/about/faq.cfm
4. A New Definition of Genetic Counseling: National Society of Genetic Counselors' Task Force Report Journal of Genetic Counseling April 2006, p. 77-82
5. International Society of Nurses in Genetics (2006). Mission Statement.
6. International Society of Nurses in Genetics, Inc. (1998). Statement on the Scope and Standards of Genetics Clinical Nursing Practice. Washington, D.C.: American Nurses Association.
7. Jenkins, J., Calzone, K., Lea, D. & Prows, C. (2005). Essential Nursing Competencies and Curricula Guidelines for Genetics and Genomics