

# Genetic Counseling



## GENETIC COUNSELING AND THE JOB MARKET

- Genetic counselors are health professionals with specialized training in medical genetics and counseling who evaluate and understand a family's risk of an inherited medical condition, then use this understanding, to provide personalized help for patients and families who may need to make decisions about their medical/genetic health.
- In 2016, the median salary for a genetic counselor was \$74,120. Employment is projected to grow much faster than average.
- Genetic Counseling was listed among the "25 Amazing Healthcare Support Jobs" and as one of the "100 Best Jobs" in 2017, by *US News and World Report*.

## WHAT DO GENETIC COUNSELORS DO?

- Interview patients to get comprehensive individual, family, and medical histories
- Evaluate genetic information to identify patients or families at risk for specific genetic disorders
- Write detailed consultation reports to provide information on complex genetic concepts for patient, or referring physicians
- Discuss testing options and the associated risks, benefits, and limitations with patients, families, and other healthcare providers
- Counsel patients and family members by providing information, education, or reassurance regarding genetic risks and inherited conditions

- Participate in professional organizations or conferences to keep abreast of developments in genetics and genomics.

## IS GENETIC COUNSELING FOR YOU?

- Are you a people-person?
- Do you like helping others?
- Are you compassionate?
- Are you a good listener?
- Are you a good communicator?
- Do you like the sciences or psychology?
- Are you interested in medicine or healthcare, but aren't sure if you want to go to medical school?

## WORK ENVIRONMENT

### Specialty Areas

- Prenatal
- Pediatric
- Neurogenetics
- Metabolic Disease
- General
- Testing
- Adult
- Cardiology

### Expansion in Specialties Between 2014 and 2016

- Cancer 29% to 48%
- Prenatal 35% to 43%
- Pediatrics 12% to 25%

### Genetic Counselors Work in a Variety of Settings

- Universities
- Hospitals
- Laboratories
- Non-Profits & Government

## SELECTED ACCREDITED GENETIC COUNSELING PROGRAMS

- Boston University School of Medicine
- Brandeis University
- Case Western Reserve University

# GENETIC COUNSELING

- Emory University School of Medicine
- National Human Genome Research Institute at Johns Hopkins
- Icahn School of Medicine at Mt. Sinai
- Northwestern University Medical School
- Stanford University School of Medicine
- University of Michigan
- University of Pittsburgh

## GENERAL APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- Prerequisite coursework may include: biology, chemistry, organic chemistry, biochemistry, genetics, statistics and psychology
- The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) (and TOEFL for international)
- Undergrad and grad transcripts
- Letters of recommendation (usually three)
- Personal statement
- Advocacy experience volunteering as a counselor or working with individuals who have a genetic condition or disability (e.g., crisis counseling, bereavement counseling)
- Shadowing or speaking to a genetic counselor to show you have explored the field is highly recommended
- Research and/or laboratory experience can also strengthen an application
- Applications typically open in the fall prior to matriculation with deadlines between December and February

## FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- American Board of Genetic Counseling: [ABGC.net](http://ABGC.net)
- American Board of Medical Genetics and Genomics: [ABMGG.org](http://ABMGG.org)
- National Society of Genetic Counselors: [NSGC.org](http://NSGC.org)
- What is Genetic Counseling
- Explore a Career as a Genetic Counselor
- Simulated genetic counseling sessions (videos)
- American Society of Human Genetics: [ASHG.org](http://ASHG.org)
- Association of Genetic Counseling Program Directors: [AGCPD.org](http://AGCPD.org)