

Improve Medicare Beneficiary Access to Genetic Counselor Services Act



Medicare beneficiaries considering genetic testing for certain conditions such as cancer, cardiovascular disease and neurological conditions, as well as emerging areas such as nephrology and ophthalmology benefit from genetic counseling to help make the right decisions about their care. With innovation rapidly evolving, most every facet of healthcare will incorporate genetics in some way.

Kidney disease: Value of genetic counselors to Medicare beneficiaries and physicians

There are several kidney diseases that have a genetic component. Patients may benefit from genetic counseling and testing as discernment of the specific subcategory of disease could allow for the development of preventative screening and treatment.

- Autosomal Dominant Polycystic Kidney Disease (ADPKD) is the most common type of inherited kidney disease with an estimated prevalence of 1:1000. Approximately 60% of individuals with ADPKD develop kidney failure by age 60. Several genetic variants correlated to age of onset, disease severity and disease progression are well documented.
- Alport syndrome and APOL1-mediated kidney disease also have genetic components that enable genetic services to diagnose and start treatments earlier to slow disease progression and to better prepare for possible transplantation.

The “Access to Genetic Counselor Services Act” would improve Medicare patient care

A primary goal of U.S. healthcare policy is to ensure innovation reaches patients. There is no better way to ensure that appropriate genetic testing reaches Medicare patients than to add genetic counselors to the Medicare program, allowing them to be part of the care team. This helps to ensure the right test is ordered for the right patient at the right time, which has demonstrated to reduce inappropriate genetic test orders and lower overall healthcare cost.

The American Kidney Fund is asking you to cosponsor the Access to Genetic Counselor Service Act (H.R. 3876/S. 2323). To become a cosponsor, please contact:

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