

# Licensing of Genetic Counselors in Maryland



## MDCGC Public Policy Committee

Margo Gallegos, MS, CGC

Carolyn Applegate, MGC, CGC

## Maryland Board of Physicians

Ellen D. Smith, Deputy Director

Stacey Darin, Esq. Board Counsel

Matthew Dudzic, Mgr., Policy/Legislation

Felicia Wright, Allied Health Supervisor



# Agenda



30-minute presentation  
from the MDCGC Public  
Policy Committee (PPC)

30-minute moderated Q&A  
with representatives from  
the PPC and Maryland Board  
of Physicians (MBP)

Additional details and history are included in previous MDCGC webinar: <https://www.mdcgc.org/mdlicensure>

# Genetic Counseling Advisory Committee (GCAC) Members



**Margo Gallegos, MS, CGC**  
Genetic Counselor Member



**Carolyn Applegate, MGC, CGC**  
Genetic Counselor Member



**Katie Bisordi, MS, MGC, CGC**  
Genetic Counselor Member



**Yakima Douglas**  
Consumer Member



**Andreas S Barth, MD, PhD**  
Physician Member



**Ada Hamosh, MD, MPH**  
Physician Member



**Amy Lewanda, MD**  
Physician Member

GCAC:  
(3) Genetic Counselors  
(3) Physicians  
(1) Consumer Member

# Genetic Counseling Advisory Committee (GCAC) Members



## From MBP:

Christine A. Farrelly, *Executive Director*

Ellen D. Smith, *Deputy Director*\*\*\*

Stacey Darin, Esq. *Board Counsel*\*\*\*

Matthew Dudzic, Mgr., *Policy/Legislation*\*\*\*

Felicia Wright, *Allied Health Supervisor*\*\*\*

Margaret Ellis Jury, *Allied Health Analyst*

Madeline DelGreco, *Health Policy Analyst*

John Shock, *Admin. Specialist III*

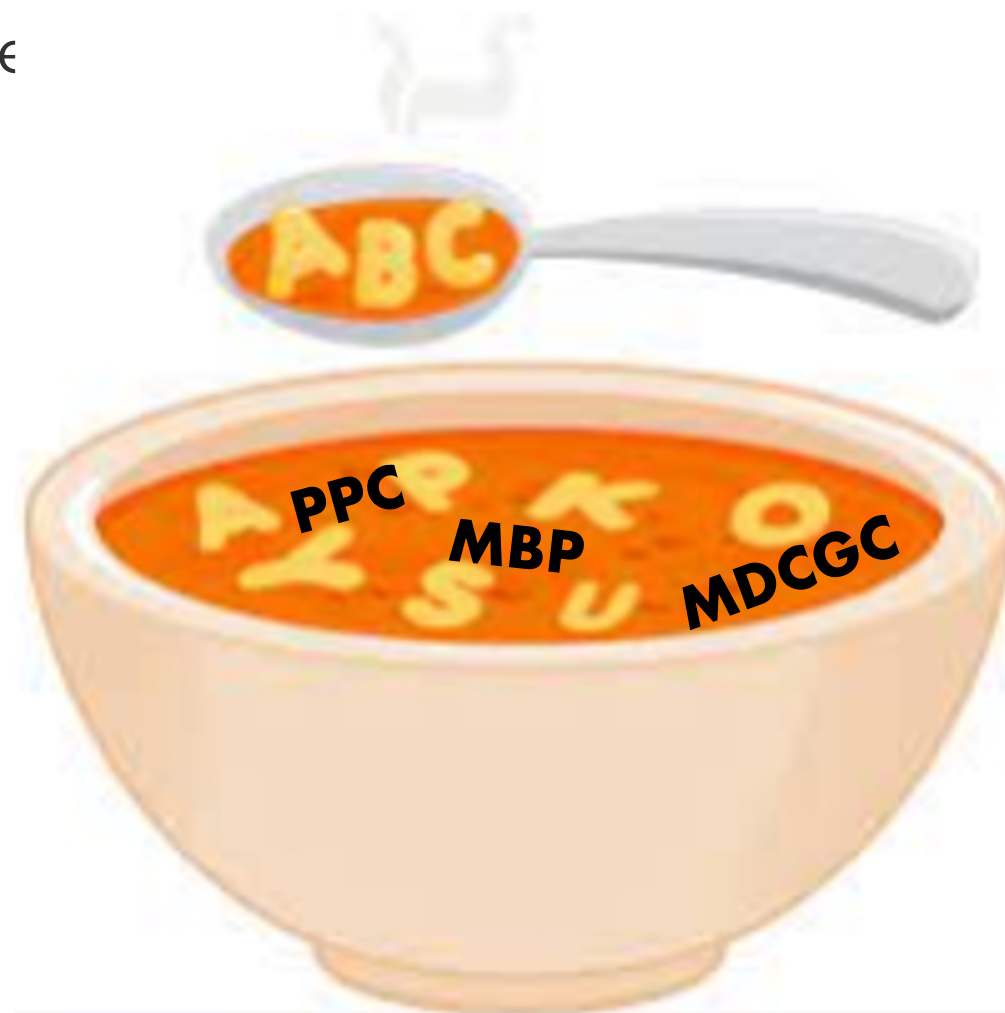
Julie Gaskins, *Paralegal*

\*\*\**Joining today*



# Alphabet soup you'll see...

- MDCGC = Maryland & DC Society of Gene
- PPC = Public Policy Committee
- MBP = Maryland Board of Physicians



# Disclaimer



**This presentation does not serve as legal advice by presenters, MDCGC, or MBP.**

If you have specific questions regarding your day-to-day workflow changes and licensure, please start with your internal compliance department.

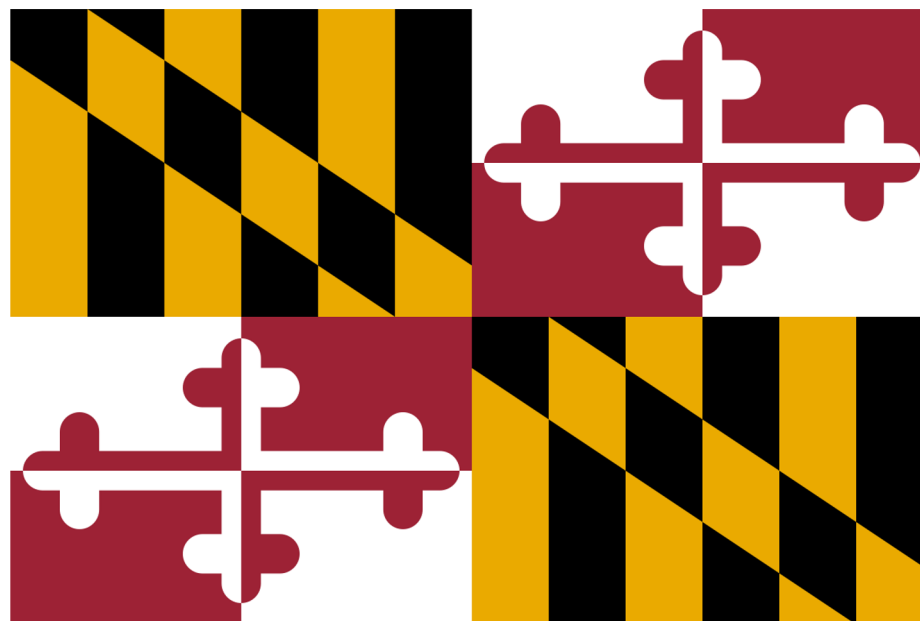
## Speakers\*:

- Margo is an employee of Ambry Genetics.
- Carolyn has no disclaimers.

*\*Opinions do not reflect views of employer.*

# What are we talking about?

- May 30, 2021 - The State Board of Physicians – Genetic Counselors – Licensing Act was enacted
  - Under Article II, Section 17(c) of the Maryland Constitution - Chapter 603



# Recognition and Thank You!



- Senator Clarence Lam & staff, particularly Scott Tiffin (Senate sponsor)

District 12, Baltimore & Howard County



- Delegate Alfred Carr & staff (House sponsor)

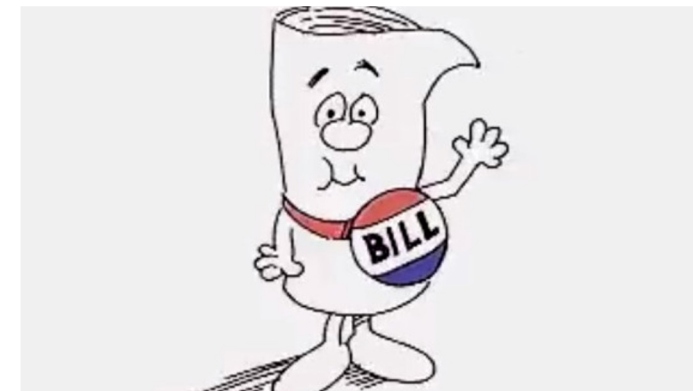
District 18, Montgomery County





# What is licensure?

- **Protects** the public from unqualified providers
  - State can act against incompetent and or unethical practitioners
  - Apply sanctions, suspend or remove license
  - Allow referring providers and patients to identify those that are qualified
- The delivery of healthcare services is **regulated** at the state level
  - Allow for independent practice
  - Licensure integrates providers into the system
  - Easier to become credentialed and reimbursed for services
- Economic savings
  - CGC role in the appropriate utilization of genetic tests



# Who needs a Maryland license?

Any individual who wishes to practice the act of or to be called a “genetic counselor” in the state of MD



# Licenses & Telemedicine



- If you are performing telemedicine services to a patient in MD, you need a Maryland license
- If you are performing telemedicine services to a patient in another state, you need to be licensed in that state



# Who does not need a license?

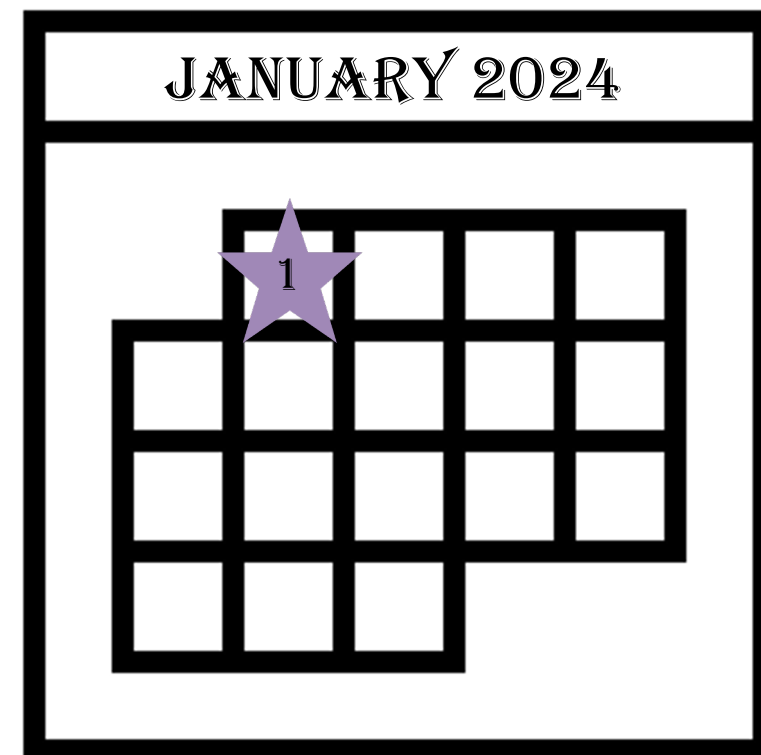
1. Individual in/active license in other state if consulting for a patient in Maryland
1. Student enrolled in GC training program

# When do I need a license?

By **January 1, 2024**

- ❑ 2-year license term
- ❑ Expires on same date every 2 years
- ❑ Licensees will be notified in advance

when the renewal window opens





# What do I need to get a license?

## With ABGC certification you need\*:

- ABGC certification
- Degree verification

OR

## Without ABGC certification you need\*:

- Completion of a Master's program in genetic counseling
- Practicing 10 years before 1/1/2024
- 3 letters of recommendations
- Time limited (**before 12/31/2024**)

**\*Need ALL items listed**

# Timeline



**May 30, 2021**

The Maryland State Board of Physicians Gene Counselors Licensing Act was passed

**October – December 2023**

- 1) CHRC
- 2) Check for good standing with your ABGC certification\*
- 3) Request & collect letters of recommendation\*

MBP Staff will confirm ABGC certification and issue license electronically

**October 1, 2021**

GC Licensing Act becomes active  
In rule-making period

**November – December 2023**

- 1) Complete online application before 12/31/23
- 2) Pay fee

**January 1, 2024**

Genetic Counselor Licensure goes into effect

**OH MY GOD IT'S HAPPENING**

**EVERYBODY STAY CALM!**





# Criminal History Records Check (CHRC)



You MUST complete a CHRC for initial application!



“Health Occupations Article §14-308.1 Md. Code Annotated requires State Board of Physicians **applicants and licensees** to submit to Criminal History Records Checks (CHRCs) as a qualification for licensure, and added a new ground for disciplinary action if a licensee fails to submit to a required CHRC.”

– Maryland Board of Physicians CHRC Info page



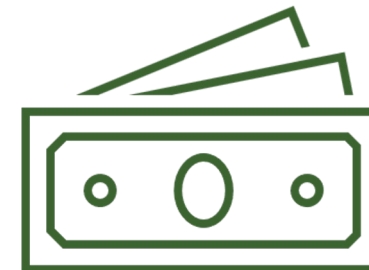
# Criminal History Records Check (CHRC)



- CHRC will include both a State and national criminal history records check conducted by the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS)
- Will be maintained in the Maryland and FBI database for further identification purposes.
- Applicants will apply to CJIS for a CHRC
- The application includes: **Fingerprints & Fees**



*1) Fingerprints:*  
Two complete sets of legible fingerprints taken on forms approved by CJIS and the FBI



*2) Fees:*  
Payment of the required fees





# Criminal History Records Check (CHRC)



## Timing is important!

- Cannot be more than 90 days prior to application
  - The Board is only authorized to retain CHRC information for 90 days.
  - If the CHRC is over 90 days, you will need to complete a new CHRC.
- Ideal timing is **within 6 weeks of submitting application**



**STATE OF MARYLAND**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES**  
**CRIMINAL JUSTICE INFORMATION SYSTEMS - CENTRAL REPOSITORY**



LIVESCAN PRE-REGISTRATION APPLICATION		
APPLICANT INFORMATION <small>(PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY)</small>		
Name: Gregor Mendel		
Date of birth: 07-20-1822	SSN: XXX-XX-1884	Gender: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <small>(Please check)</small>



# Criminal History Records Check (CHRC)



## Timing is important!

- If you CAN go to a finger-printing location in Maryland...
  - Allow ~1 week for CHRC to get to the Board
- If you CANNOT physically go to a location in Maryland...
  - You will need to request a finger-print card to be mailed to you and then you mail it back
  - Leave at least 2 weeks for this process

Please do not contact the Board to verify receipt or submit receipts. The Board receives electronic CHRC notifications within 72 hours. When you receive your CHRC results (by mail), the Board receives results at the same time. Do not call the Board to verify receipt of your CHRC results. Board staff will not verify receipt of results. Retain your receipt in your records.



# Fingerprinting for CHRC



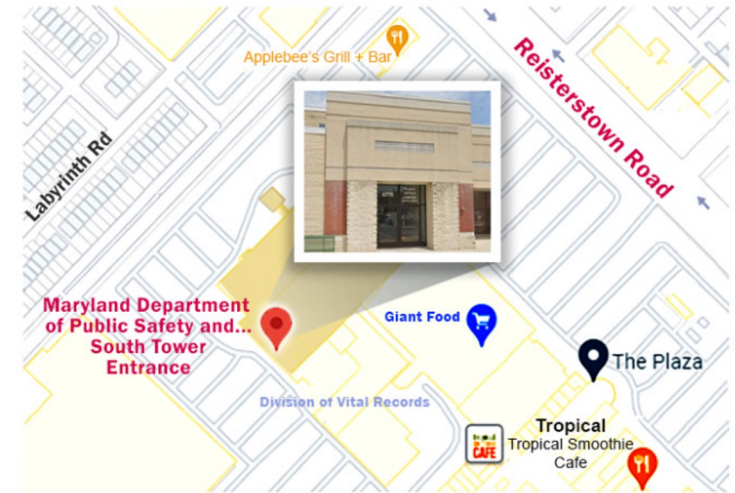
**Notice: The CJIS Storefront, 6776 Reisterstown Road, Suite 101, Baltimore, MD has resumed Walk-in Service for applicant fingerprinting.**

For priority service, appointments can still be made for the CJIS Storefront located at 6776 Reisterstown Road, Suite 101, Baltimore, MD 21215. Please call 410-764-4501 or 1-888-795-0011 (toll free) to make an appointment for applicant fingerprinting.

Appointments are required at all CJIS MVA fingerprinting offices.

- CJIS MVA, 501 West MacPhail Road, Bel Air, MD
- CJIS MVA, 1601 Bowman's Farm Road, Frederick, MD
- CJIS MVA, 6601 Ritchie Hwy, N.E., Glen Burnie, MD
- CJIS MVA, 251 Tilghman Rd, Salisbury, MD
- CJIS MVA, 11 Industrial Park Drive, Waldorf, MD

Thank you for your patience and cooperation. Your safety is our top priority!



et Directions

#### Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) Operated Fingerprinting Services

Location: 6776 Reisterstown Road  
(Entrance located on the back side of Reisterstown Road Plaza)  
Suite 101 (first floor)  
Baltimore, MD 21215  
For directions, go to [Google Maps](#)

Phone: 410-764-4501  
1-888-795-0011 (toll free)

Hours of Operation: Monday-Friday 8:30 am - 5:00 pm

Closed on designated State holidays and weather related State closings.

Also private centers: <https://www.dpscs.state.md.us/publicservs/fingerprint.shtml>

**FOR FAST AND ACCURATE SERVICE**



1. If you are requesting a background check for employment or licensing purposes you must provide the agency's name and authorization number.
2. If the background check is being sent to a government agency, a Z - ORI number may also be required.
3. You must bring a valid form of government issued photo identification.
4. The attached should be printed out and brought to any Private Provider, CJIS or Government Operated Fingerprinting Service: [Livescan Pre-registration Application](#).
5. Bring payment as indicated below. Major credit cards and debit cards are accepted. Cash, checks, and money orders are not accepted at the Criminal Justice Information System - Central Repository.



**STATE OF MARYLAND**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES**  
**CRIMINAL JUSTICE INFORMATION SYSTEMS - CENTRAL REPOSITORY**

**CATEGORY**

**BACKGROUND CHECK COST**  
 (CJIS Service Fee of \$20.00 is included for In-Person fingerprinting\*)

Full background [state and FBI] for authorized agencies only	\$31.25 for Mail-In *\$51.25 for In-Person
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**LIVESCAN PRE-REGISTRATION APPLICATION**

**APPLICANT INFORMATION (PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY)**

Name: Gregor Mendel		
Date of birth: 07-20-1822	SSN: XXX-XX-1884	Gender: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <small>(Please check)</small>



# What are the licensing fees?



- Initial fees:
  - License fee - \$300
  - Supervised GC license fee - \$100
- Renewal fees:
  - \$250
  - +/- \$26 State Maryland Health Care Commission fee
    - Amount is determined by State of Maryland
    - May be waived
- Fees are
  - Determined during rule-making
  - Based on:
    - annual expenditures of MBP and
    - demographic percentages of all its licensure programs
- MBP has agreed to do a fees reassessment after the first two cycles (4 years)



# Summary of licensing fees



## First Time Applying for a License

License initial application fee	\$300
State & FBI Background Check	\$31.25 (Mail-In) \$51.25 (In-Person)
Total	<i>Approximately*:</i> \$331.25 (Mail-In) \$351.25 (In-Person)

## First Time Applying for a Supervised GC License

License initial application fee	\$300
State & FBI Background Check	\$31.25 (Mail-In) \$51.25 (In-Person)
Total	<i>Approximately*:</i> \$331.25 (Mail-In) \$351.25 (In-Person)

*\*Not including cost of mailing*

## Renewing a License

License Renewal fee	\$250
State Maryland Health Care Commission fee <i>(maybe waived, amount determined by State of Maryland)</i>	<i>Approximately:</i> +/- \$26
Total	<i>Approximately:</i> \$250 (SMHCC fee waived) or \$276 (SMHCC fee)

# Licensed in another st

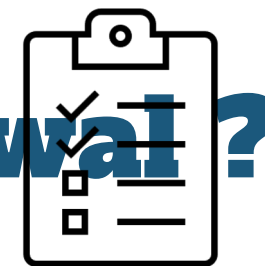


- Will need to “provide documentation of licensure, certification, or registration form all states and jurisdictions where the applicant has ever held a license, certificate, or registration in any health professions.”
- Verification of credentials will need to come directly from the source in question.
  - The application will include forms to be sent to relevant state and returned directly to the board

# Verifications



- Verification of credentials will need to come directly from the source in question.
  - ABGC Certification: the application will request a certification/registration number and date of certification
  - GC Education: application will include forms to be sent to relevant institution and returned directly to the board
  - Other State Licenses: application will include forms to be sent to relevant state and returned directly to the board



# What is needed to renewal?

- Complete renewal application
- Pay renewal fee
  - \$250 +/- \$26
- Maintain ABGC certification
  - Including CEUs!
- See statute for specific requirements

# What about new grads? Supervised Genetic Counseling license



Who is this issued to?

- Graduated from accredited GC program
- Board-eligible status
- Has applied for first available certifying exam upon graduation

Who can this NOT be issued to?

- If individual fails ABGC exams 2+ times
- A supervised GC who has not passed the exam within 2 exam cycles may not continue practicing under supervised GC license



# Supervised Genetic Counselor License

*“A supervised genetic counselor may practice only under the supervision of a qualified supervisor.”*

- Qualified supervisor (QS) and supervised GC (SGC) must enter a written “supervision contract”
  - Maintain documentation of the agreement and meetings!
    - Specifies manner of supervision
    - Specifies alternative qualified supervisors as appropriate
    - Is signed by the supervised GC and qualified supervisor
    - Is maintained by both the SGC and QS and made available upon request to the MBP



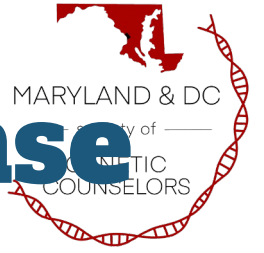


# Supervised Genetic Counselor License

***“A supervised genetic counselor may practice only under the supervision of a qualified supervisor.”***

- Supervision is defined as the "ongoing, direct, clinical review" by a qualified supervisors who monitors the performance of a supervised genetic counselor's supervised interactions
- The GC must be *readily available* during these interactions.
  - The exact method of supervision (in person, on site, direct, etc.) is not defined, and would be established in the written supervision contract between the qualified supervisor and the supervised genetic counselor.
  - The QGC does not need to be in the same building or room, but needs to be readily available to the SGC

# Supervised Genetic Counselor License



## Who can be a **qualified supervisor**?

- Licensed GC who has practiced for 3+ years
- Physician who has been licensed in the state for 5+ years

# Supervised Genetic Counselor License



## Term and Expiration:

- Cannot last more than one year
  - Expires in the following ways:
    - Full GC license is issued
    - On notice of not passing the certification exam on second attempt
    - 1 year after issued
- If the Supervised GC does not pass the certification exam in 2 attempts, they are expected to:
  - Report to the MBP the 2<sup>nd</sup> certification exam failure
  - Relinquish the supervised genetic counselor license
  - Cannot continue practicing under the supervised genetic counselor license

# Ordering tests

- Under the law, practicing genetic counseling means “Identifying, Ordering, and coordinating genetic laboratory tests or other diagnostic tests, as appropriate, for the purposes of a genetic assessment...”
- GCs can order genetic tests

## Important!!

If, while practicing genetic counseling, a licensed GC determines that a patient requires a diagnosis or treatment, THE GENETIC COUNSELOR SHALL REFER THE PATIENT TO A LICENSED PHYSICIAN OR ANOTHER APPROPRIATE HEALTH CARE PRACTITIONER.

# What happens if there is a complaint?



If there is a complaint for a reason listed in the law (available online)...

1. Licensee will be given opportunity for **hearing** before Board/disciplinary panel
2. If convicted or plead guilty, license can be **suspended/revoked**
3. **Fine** can be imposed in addition to suspending/revoking license, reprimanding licensee, or placing licensee on probation
4. Individuals who have licensed revoked will have **information disclosed to public** by Board
5. Unable to practice genetic counseling or refer to self as genetic counselor/similar (violation \$1000 fine or imprisonment for 1 year)

# Glossary



- Licensed GC
- Supervised GC license
- Qualified supervisor
- Renewal
- Reinstatement



# MBP Resources



- Maryland Board of Physicians Home:
  - <https://www.mbp.state.md.us/default.aspx>
- Allied Health Applications (where the GC Application will be when ready):
  - [https://www.mbp.state.md.us/resource\\_information/res\\_pro/resource\\_practitioner\\_forms\\_ah.aspx](https://www.mbp.state.md.us/resource_information/res_pro/resource_practitioner_forms_ah.aspx)
- Resources & Information Overview:
  - [https://www.mbp.state.md.us/resource\\_information/resource.aspx](https://www.mbp.state.md.us/resource_information/resource.aspx)
- FAQs:
  - [https://www.mbp.state.md.us/resource\\_information/FAQs/resource\\_faqs.aspx](https://www.mbp.state.md.us/resource_information/FAQs/resource_faqs.aspx)
- Contact information:
  - <https://www.mbp.state.md.us/contact.aspx>
  - Email: [mbpmail@rcn.com](mailto:mbpmail@rcn.com)
  - Call: 410.764.4777 (local), 1.800.492.6836 (toll-free)

# CHRC Resources



- CHRC General Information:
  - [https://www.mbp.state.md.us/resource\\_information/res\\_pro/resource\\_Practitioner\\_chrc.aspx](https://www.mbp.state.md.us/resource_information/res_pro/resource_Practitioner_chrc.aspx)
- CHRC Instructions:
  - [https://www.mbp.state.md.us/forms/CHRC\\_Instructions\\_MBP.pdf](https://www.mbp.state.md.us/forms/CHRC_Instructions_MBP.pdf)
- Fingerprinting for CHRC:
  - <https://www.dpscs.state.md.us/publicservs/fingerprint.shtml>

# How does this differ from federal legislation?



- Federal licensure:
  - Allows for recognition of genetic counseling services under CMS
  - Increase access to genetic services for all patients
  - Allows for telemedicine services by GC
  
- Federal licensure does not have to do with:
  - Test ordering (that is limited to state)
  - Multi-state licensure



# Summary

- GCs must be licensed by **January 1, 2024**
- Applications will be open **October 23**
- Only a licensed GC can refer to themselves as a GC
- GCs can order genetic testing if licensed in MD
- No impact on billing
- New graduates operate under “supervised GC license”
- GCs are subject to rules and regulations of state

“IT ALWAYS  
SEEMS  
IMPOSSIBLE  
UNTIL  
IT’S DONE”

-NELSON MANDELA



# Questions?



Email

[info@mdcgc.org](mailto:info@mdcgc.org)

[mbpmail@rcn.com](mailto:mbpmail@rcn.com)

Please include “licensure question” in the subject line





# Q&A

With members of the Maryland Board of Physicians



**OH MY GOD IT'S HAPPENING**

**EVERYBODY STAY CALM!**

