

**CONSUMERS NEED PROTECTION IN ABSENCE OF
FEDERAL SAFEGUARDS FOR DTC GENETIC TESTS**
*National Society of Genetic Counselors Urges Consumers to
Seek Advice of a Genetic Counselor*

CHICAGO – July 27, 2010 – As attention to direct-to-consumer (DTC) genetic screening tests increases, so does the risk that inappropriate tests may be ordered or test results may be misinterpreted, according to the National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC). As the federal government explores regulating genetic testing, consumers should seek the advice of a genetic counselor or clinical geneticist prior to testing.

“Genetic tests can reveal life-changing information, both positive and negative, but misinterpreting test results can be dangerous,” said Elizabeth Kearney, President of NSGC. “The most important first step for consumers to understand when considering genetic testing is what can be learned from the test, and the impact the results could have on their lives and families. Genetic testing should only be done through guidance of a genetic counselor or health care provider whose role is to protect the consumer, and assure they have appropriate testing and an accurate understanding of the results.”

Without the advice of a genetic counselor:

1. You may get a battery of test results, but you won't get answers to your questions.
2. You may receive test results that are alarming without someone to talk to about your concerns.
3. You may not know what action you can take based on the test results or you may be paying for information you already know.

Genetic counselors work closely with physicians to help patients determine if and when they should undergo genetic testing. It is important that someone who has expertise in genetics helps you understand and interpret your test results. For example, genetic counselors have specialized training in medical genetics and counseling and have master's degrees in their field.

For more information or to find a genetic counselor in your area, visit www.nsgc.org.

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