



202 S. Park Street
Madison, WI 53715
unitypoint.org

March 10, 2022

Governor Tony Evers
PO Box 7863
Madison WI 53707

RE: SB 259

Governor Evers,

UnityPoint Health-Meriter is reaching out to encourage you to sign SB 259 into law. As is the case in 29 other states, this legislation is critical to assure that Wisconsinites are receiving genetic counseling information from qualified licensed professionals. Of the more than 130 genetic counselors in Wisconsin, UnityPoint Health – Meriter employs 4 genetic counselors in our Center for Perinatal Care. Each year our genetic counselors support approximately 2,100 families as they navigate the complexities of prenatal testing and diagnosis.

As genetic tests and technologies grow exponentially over time, the need for licensure through the enactment of SB 259 is a necessity. The benefits of licensure includes:

- Patient protection: Licensure affords a legal mechanism for complaints of incompetent, unethical and/or unlawful behavior by a genetic counselor to be formally investigated and for placement of sanctions or revocation of the genetic counselor's license if these offenses are proven.
- Technical expertise: Licensure of genetic counselors will ensure that patients and their healthcare providers can identify a qualified professional who will select the right genetic tests, provide proper informed consent, and ensure that test results are properly understood and appropriately used for subsequent decision-making.
- Access to services: Licensure recognizes that results of genetic testing often guide medical decisions, including care for pediatric and adult patients with cancer, neurological disorders, heart conditions and hundreds of other health problems.

We urge you to sign SB 259 into law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura Birkeland".

Laura Birkeland, MS, CGC (lead)
Laura Jean Witt, MS, CGC
Karina Kidd, MGCS, CGC
Kathy Kenley, MS, CGC