



CASEY EYE
Institute

Andreas K. Lauer, MD
Chair, Department of Ophthalmology
Casey Eye Institute
515 SW Campus Drive
Portland, Oregon 97239-4197
tel 1 503-418-5045
lauera@ohsu.edu

February 2, 2021

Dear Oregon Legislators:

Thank you for considering **HB 2619 - Support for genetic counselor licensure:**

Oregon needs to follow other states in providing licensure for genetic counselors. Now that we have effective treatment for inherited retinal conditions through gene therapy, it is essential that patients, their families and our communities in Oregon are counseled by individuals that are held to a high and consistent standard. **We are among the few the leading ocular gene therapy center in the world** and I am one of the gene therapy surgeons. The conversations, education and support provided by genetic counselors have deep implications for not only the patient but for generations as families cope with living with inherited medical conditions. Such conditions can cause cancer, blindness, disability and disfigurement through generations.

Genetic counselors are adept at recommending the right testing for the right situation and this is far more accurate and economical than a shotgun approach that leads to excessive testing. Excess testing is costly and if money is no object use of non-focused testing results in having to mitigate abnormal results from non-disease causing mutations or less accurate genetic tests. This is where **genetic counselors are truly guardians for the care of patient and their families with inherited medical conditions. They prevent patients from being physically or emotionally harmed by misinformation. They offer up to date content. They provide support and hope. They enable patients and their families to make the right decisions.**

Our friends and families in Oregon deserve this. Oregon needs genetic counselor licensure. **Please support HB 2619**

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Andreas K. Lauer, M.D.
Chair, Department of Ophthalmology
Professor and Thiele-Petti Endowed Chair
Casey Eye Institute
Oregon Health & Science University
503-418-5045
lauera@ohsu.edu