



April 30, 2024

Emma Schultheis
Legislative Clerk
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Also e-mailed in Word format to
Emma.Schultheis@mail.house.gov

Dear Ms. Schultheis,

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee on Health on Wednesday, February 14, 2024, to testify at the hearing entitled “Legislative Proposals to Support Patients and Caregivers.” I write to formally respond to the via transmittal letter by the close of business on Wednesday, May 1, 2024 to the question from the Honorable Neal Dunn, M.D. which you sent to me via letter dated April 16, 2024. The complete text of the question from Honorable Neal Dunn, MD is set forth below along with my answer to his question.

Question from the Honorable Neal Dunn, MD:

Genetic counselors play an essential role when there are genetic aspects to disease and conditions. They ensure patients and family members who would benefit from genetic testing gain access to appropriate testing and ensure physicians and their patients understand test results well. Genetic counselors also help navigate follow-up care and identify clinical trials that may be of benefit. Today, Medicare does not reimburse genetic counselor services. Should this policy change?

Answer:

We agree that genetic counselors play an essential role when there are genetic aspects to disease and conditions and that they ensure patients and family members who would benefit from genetic testing gain access to appropriate testing and ensure physicians and their patients understand test results well.

As important members of clinical care teams, genetic counselors are experiencing high degrees of burnout. In fact, in a [2020 study](#), genetic counselors are experiencing burnout at a rate of 57%. The Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act created two types of programs to support health workforce wellbeing and mental health. The first was a grant program administered by HRSA to 44 organizations which are being referred to collectively as the [Workplace Change Collaborative](#). The second was an education campaign focused on healthcare leaders administered by NIOSH entitled [Impact Wellbeing](#) which gives hospital leaders evidence-informed solutions to reduce health worker burnout, sustain well-being, and build a system where health workers thrive. In both cases, the Workplace Change Collaborative and Impact Wellbeing Campaign are emphasizing the need for an interdisciplinary approach to improving health workforce wellbeing and mental health.

Given the [CDC Vital Signs](#) report from October 2023 identified that our health workforce is in a mental health crisis with nearly half (46%) of health workers reported often feeling burned out, nearly half (44%) of health workers intending to look for a new job and more than double the number of health workers reported harassment at work, it is critically important that Congress take action now to Reauthorize and fully fund the Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act (HR 7153/S 3679).

Should you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Corey Feist', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

J. Corey Feist

CEO and Co-Founder

Dr. Lorna Breen Heroes' Foundation