



April 28 2016

To the CAGC Professional Governance Committee:

On February 2 2016, the Board of Directors (BoD) held a special meeting to discuss issues surrounding regulation and registry. Given the incredible amount of work that the Professional Governance Committee dedicated to this subject, we wanted this committee to be the first to learn the details of our discussion and decision-making regarding how we intend to move forward.

We carefully reviewed both the recommendations made by the PGC in November 2014 as well as new legal information obtained in June 2015. With this letter, we provide a summary of the three recommendations made by the PGC and the BoD responses and decisions relating to each of these areas.

1- The PGC recommended the immediate establishment of a public relation (PR) body within the CAGC advocating the advantages, merits and need for trained genetic counselors.

The BoD agreed with this recommendation and is currently working to hire a communication specialist. This person will develop an integrated communication plan with consistent messages and strategies to promote the genetic counselling profession in Canada. The BoD wishes to implement this plan in 2016-2017.

2- The PGC recommended the establishment of a clear process for identifying certified genetic counselors, either as a National Registry of Genetic Counsellors in Canada or as an entity within the CAGC. The establishment of this body would need to include a means for recognizing certification and continuing education, a process for investigations and complaints, and a record of disciplinary action. This should be established in conjunction with a PR campaign.

In June 2015, the BoD obtained legal advice regarding the option of creating a registry versus an umbrella college. The key points from this discussion are listed here:

- A stand-alone college is not currently an option.
- Within a registry, disciplinary actions can be pursued but the costs are prohibitive. Furthermore, for all genetic counselors working in a hospital setting, certain disciplinary actions are upheld within the institution.

- Under an umbrella college, a specific professional group within that college has the power to trigger a separate panel (composed of genetic counselors) to address complaints and disciplinary actions, should a concern arise. This ensures that genetic counselling related concerns and decisions are not made by other health care professionals with no specific expertise in our field.

Based on this information, the BoD felt that we would not be able to establish the proper funding necessary to cover a possible lawsuit following a disciplinary action. We considered establishing a registry without the disciplinary action component but ultimately voted against that option since such an entity would not be different from our current Certification Board.

Instead, we proposed and ultimately voted in favor of moving towards the transition of the Certification Committee into a Canadian Board of Genetic Counselling (CBGC). This would be accomplished through strengthening the current Certification Committee and increasing the separation (both optically and functionally) between the CAGC and the Certification Committee. This change would be done in concert with the PR campaign, hence increasing awareness, both at the public and employers level, promoting the profession and encouraging the hiring of only certified genetic counsellors. We are in discussions with the Certification Committee about this shift in structure and strategy.

3- The PGC recommended that the CAGC support a move toward licensure in provinces where numbers are sufficient, with eventual move toward licensure countrywide.

Since the PGC report in 2014, several provinces have been increasingly moving towards creation of umbrella colleges. The BoD opted to establish a formal structure within the CAGC to support each province and territory working towards licensure. A Professional Regulation Committee (PRC) is being created. The Terms of Reference are being drawn and the first draft is as follow:

The PRC will be responsible for:

- Investigating and proceeding with (at the agreement of the BOD) any and all steps that help lead to regulatory status for genetic counsellors in Canada.
- Maintaining a repository of documents and tools on the CAGC website that may assist any members seeking regulation in their geographical areas.
- Overseeing a Community of Practice (CoP) that will foster communication between those members pursuing regulation in their respective geographical areas.

In summary, the BoD has unanimously voted to:

- Hire a communication specialist to assist in the development and implementation of a nationwide PR campaign.
- Support the transition of the Certification Committee toward becoming the Canadian Board of Genetic Counselling, a step that we recognize requires the agreement and participation of the Certification Committee.
- Create a Professional Regulation Committee to actively support any and all local (provincial and territorial) efforts toward achieving licensure.

Thank you again to the Professional Governance Committee members for all of your work on the regulation of the genetic counselling profession in Canada. The BoD is looking forward to your feedback and hope to

begin strong discussions that will further the interests of both groups and the membership that we serve together.

Sincerely,



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