



GENETIC NON-DISCRIMINATION ACT (GNA)

On May 4, 2017 the Genetic Non-Discrimination Act (GNA), formerly known as Bill S-201, was passed into law in Canada.

- GNA protects individuals from the use of genetic test results in areas outside of medical care and medical research, such as insurance and employment
- GNA was created to remove barriers to the appropriate use of genetic services by the public

This overview provides information about the law.

GNA does not change, and should not impede, medical practice. Research suggests that the law's protections might ease concerns some patients have when considering genetic testing.

Protection GNA provides

Under GNA, providers of goods and services, including insurance providers, cannot

- request or require that a person undergo a genetic test
- request or require the disclosure of previous or future genetic test results

Under GNA, federally regulated employers cannot

- use a person's genetic test results in decisions about hiring, firing, job assignments, or promotions
- request or require genetic test results of an employee

Under GNA, the Canadian Human Rights Act

- bans discrimination based on genetic characteristics

Types of genetic test results protected by GNA

- genetic test result is defined as a test that analyzes DNA, RNA or chromosomes for purposes such as the prediction of disease or vertical transmission risks, or monitoring, diagnosis or prognosis
- this applies to tests done in a clinical or research setting



GNA: Talking with Patients

When to Talk about GNA with a Patient

- If the patient asks or expresses concern about privacy or use of genetic test results
- If you are proposing genetic testing
- If the patient is requesting genetic testing

Suggestions for Discussions with Your Patients

General Information

There is a law – the Genetic Non-discrimination Act, GNA for short – that protects you from use of genetic test results in certain types of settings, including insurance and certain types of employment

GNA prevents insurance companies from using your genetic test results against you. Employers that are regulated by the federal government also cannot use genetic test results. For example, they cannot use this information to:

- set prices or decide whether you get insurance, or
- make decisions about hiring, firing, job assignments, or promotions

If Your Patient Already has a Genetic Disorder

Insurers often base their decisions on your current symptoms and diagnoses. GNA doesn't prohibit insurers from using information about your condition – even if that condition has a genetic basis.

Insurers typically ask about family medical history. Family medical history is not protected by GNA. If a close family member applied for insurance, they may need to report your medical condition, but would not be asked to provide your genetic test results.

Full Text of the Law

To view the full text of the law passed by the government, visit this link:

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Language=E&Mode=1&DocId=8923059>

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