

# Memo

**To:** NACHGR  
**From:** Heather Zierhut, PhD, MS, CGC, 2022 President  
**Date:** May 9, 2022  
**Re:** National Society of Genetic Counselors Activity Update

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Following are key highlights of National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC) strategic initiatives and other key activities through early May 2022. If you have questions about information not included in this report, please do not hesitate to contact me at [genomejourney@gmail.com](mailto:genomejourney@gmail.com). Additionally, we continue to welcome the opportunity for conversation around opportunities for RFAs for Genetic Counseling R01 and R25 grants, the Human Genetics and Genomics Workforce Diversity Initiative, as well as additional conversation around how NSGC can support the NHGRI strategic plan.

## **NSGC Membership**

- As of October 30, 2021 NSGC had 4,707 members;
- Members are still renewing and joining for the 2022 membership year.

## **Board of Directors**

- The NSGC Board will be met in person March 19-21, 2022.
- The next in person meeting of the Board is scheduled for June 8-9, 2022
- The newly launched NSGC 2022-2024 strategic plan is available on the [NSGC website](#) and outlines the Society's strategic priorities over the next three years

## **Research**

- NSGC's top research priorities have been outlined in: [Advancing the genetic counseling profession through research: Identification of priorities by the National Society of Genetic Counselors research task force](#).
- Our Research, Quality and Outcomes Committee is developing recommendations for an infrastructure to advance and support patient outcomes research by and about genetic counselors.

## **Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**

- Justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion is one of the four strategic areas of focus in our 2022-2024 strategic plan.
- In mid-2020, NSGC engaged the health equity firm, the Exeter Group to conduct an organizational DEI assessment. The Exeter Group DEI Assessment and Recommendations were released April 28, 2021 and were open for comment by stakeholders during mid-2021. The report and stakeholder comments received are available [here](#).
- The Exeter Group has been leading an NSGC J.E.D.I. Action Planning Task Force to develop an implementation plan for the recommendations that will be integrated into the 2022-2024 strategic plan. The final plan is expected to be available in early to mid-summer 2022.

- We have been in dialogue with ASHG and other organizations as we develop our action plan to ensure our organizational efforts align with, and contribute to increasing diversity and inclusion in the broader genetics and genomics workforce and extend the reach of genetics and genomics into underserved patient populations.
- NSGC recently hired our first J.E.D.I. Manager, a paid staff position to help our organization advance and operationalize J.E.D.I. principles and practices within our organization.
- We would welcome a dialogue with NHGRI to align and collaborate around genetics workforce diversity initiatives as our efforts move forward.

## **Education and Publications**

- NSGC is approved as a provider of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for genetic counselors. Please contact [Jennifer Aron](#), NSGC Continuing Education Coordinator, with any questions.
- The 2022 NSGC Annual Conference will be held November 16-20, 2022 in Nashville, TN. Due to the ongoing uncertainty related to COVID-19, variants and to increase accessibility for all interested attendees, the conference will be held in a hybrid format with sessions available both in-person and online. Information is available on the [NSGC website](#).
- NSGC has many online educational opportunities available for additional continuing education. These cover a variety of topics such as family history, coding and billing and cultural competence. Additional information on these and other courses is available to the public on the [NSGC Online Education Center](#).
- Recently released online courses include:
  - *The Formation of Implicit Biases and Practical Strategies to Address Them*
  - *Polygenic Risk Scores in Clinical Practice*
  - *What the Specialized Genetic Counselor Needs to Know about Other Areas of Genomic Medicine Genetic Counseling Specialties Review: Cancer, Prenatal, Personalized and Precision Medicine*
  - *Integrating Pharmacogenomic Testing into Clinical Practice*
- Recordings of all sessions from the 2020 Annual Conference are [available online](#). 2021 Annual Conference Sessions will be available in the coming weeks.

## **Liaison Activities**

- NSGC Past President Joy Larsen Haidle is serving as NSGC's representative on the American Society of Clinical Oncology's (ASCO) CancerLinQ Oncology Leadership Council.
- Jennifer Hoskovec represents NSGC as liaison to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) Committee on Genetics.
- Rachel Mills represents NSGC on the Inter-Society Coordinating Committee for Practitioner Education in Genomics (ISCC).
- Barbara Bernhardt is serving as the NSGC liaison to the "value of genetic diagnosis" committee led by Marc Williams from ACMG.
- Cate Walsh Vockley represents NSGC on the HRSA Advisory Committee on Heritable Disorders in Newborns and Children Subcommittee (ACHDNC).
- Past President Cathy Wicklund represents NSGC on the National Academies of Medicine Roundtable on Genomics and Precision Health.
- Ashley Parrot is representing NSGC as liaison to the ACMG Practice Guidelines Committee.

- Maria Baker is serving as liaison to the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer (CoC).
- Megan Frone is representing NSGC to the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC).
- Karen Lewis represents NSGC on the AMA CPT/Health Care Professional Advisory Committee Council.
- Rhonda Schonberg is NSGC's representative to the National Advisory Council for Human Genome Research (NACHGR).
- Alix D'Angelo is representing NSGC as a member of the Training Residents in Genetics (TRIG) Committee. The TRIG committee is comprised of representatives from pathology and genetics organizations and is focused on ensuring genetics is included in future training of pathology residents.
- Kristin Vogel Postula is representing NSGC as a member of the American Association of Oncology Nurse Navigators (AONN+) Advisory Committee.
- NSGC Past President Karin Dent represents NSGC as a member of the Genetics in Primary Care Institute, an initiative of the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Heather Hampel is representing NSGC as a member of the National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable (NCCRT).
- Sarah Kalia is serving as NSGC's representative to the ACMG Incidental Findings Working Group.
- Allison Cirino is representing NSGC as liaison to the Functional Genomics and Translational Biology (FGTB) Council of the American Heart Association.
- NSGC Past President Angie Trepanier and Meg Doerr represent NSGC on the G2C2 Committee.
- Anna Dennis is representing NSGC on the Northwest Regional Newborn Screening Advisory Board.
- Kelly Knickelbein is representing NSGC on the Cancer Precision Medicine Commons, the follow-up project to the Consistent Testing Terminology Working Group coordinated by LUNGeivity and involving other patient advocacy groups, societies and industry.
- Karen Wain is serving as NSGC representative to the Association for Molecular Pathology Clinical Whole Exome Sequencing for Inherited Conditions as a First-Line Test: Spectrum of Applications and Standards

## **Government Relations and Advocacy**

- Several NSGC position statements are in development or revision. All NSGC position statements are available on the [NSGC website](#).
- NSGC is pursuing legislation that will recognize genetic counselors as Medicare providers, the *Access to Genetic Counselor Services Act* (H.R. 2144/ S. 14250). Organizations interested in supporting this legislation can learn more [here](#).
- On May 18, 2022, Dr. Eric Green is joining NSGC for a Congressional briefing on the role of genetic counselors and the need for CMS recognition of genetic counselors to help provide access to Medicare patients as they seek to understand the hereditary nature of diseases impacting their health.
- NSGC is providing ongoing guidance to states pursuing licensure and writing licensure rules and regulations:
  - [Issuing licenses](#): AL, AK, CA, CT, DE, FL, GA, ID, IL, IN, IA, KY, LA, MA, MI, MN, MT, NE, NH, NJ, NM, ND, OH, OK, OR, PA, SD, TN, UT, VA, WA
  - [Passed bills/in rulemaking](#): HI, MD
  - ~20 additional states have bills introduced or in preparation