

PUBLIC HEALTH GENETIC COUNSELOR

Work in this class involves providing genetic counseling, evaluation, intervention, education, and referral services to families with genetic disorders and birth defects. Employees are concerned with an extensive number of genetic disorders in their role as liaison between the medical center geneticist and families. Employees are the primary source to identify clients/ families in need of further evaluation. Work involves reviewing case records, meeting with the family to obtain family and medical history, and explaining the reason for further referrals, suspected diagnosis and its implications, in-hesitance patterns, etc. Employees arrange preliminary diagnostic tests, perform a preliminary genetic evaluation, summarize, and present the case with recommendations or impressions to the medical geneticist prior to the clinic visit; assist in the diagnostic evaluation; and provide oral and written follow-up of interpretative conference information to the family. Employees provide crisis intervention, counseling, and support to the family and assist then in dealing with feelings of guilt and grief; assess family's need for more in-depth counseling services, and make appropriate referrals.

Employees are also responsible for the coordination of the genetic satellite clinics; develop and present educational programs, or lectures to nursing classes, parent groups, students and teachers in the public schools, universities and community colleges and health fairs. Employees provide consultation to health department staff, DEC staff, and the medical community. Employees represent the Genetics Program by serving on regional or state committees; educate health care professionals to recognize indicators of genetic problems; provide input in program development; and may conduct clinical research.

Employees have region-wide responsibility and receive medical support as it relates to genetic counseling activities through the medical centers. They report administratively to the regional supervisor and programmatically to the statewide genetic health care program manager.

I. DIFFICULTY OF WORK:

Variety and Scope - Employees provide genetic counseling, evaluation, intervention, education, and referral services to families; assist in diagnostic evaluation of cases; provide follow-up of interpretative information; provide counseling and support to families; assess need for more in-depth therapy and make referrals for needed services. Employees coordinate genetic satellite clinics; develop and present workshops, or lectures to nursing classes, students and teachers in the public school, community colleges, or universities as well as parent groups and the lay community; educate medical professionals to recognize indicators of genetic problems; represent the Genetics Program by serving on regional and statewide committees. Work with supervisors and medical genetics center to develop new services/methods for the program.

Intricacy - Employees use considerable judgement in the preliminary evaluation of cases. They provide oral and written follow-up of interpretative information; explain diagnosis and its implications, inheritance patterns, etc., and provide counseling and support to families in dealing with feelings of guilt, grief, and adjustment; assess families need for more in-depth counseling. Employees provide didactic consultation and training to medical professionals and other disciplines regarding indicators of genetic problems, inheritance patterns, etc.; may conduct clinical research. Employees stay abreast of new scientific information and technology in the developing field of human genetics, working knowledge base and may prepare written materials about the new service.

Subject Matter Complexity - Work requires a thorough knowledge of the theories and principles of human genetics, counseling and communication techniques, and dynamics of human behavior; and consultation and training techniques; community organization theories; and full understanding of public health programs. Work also requires the integration of new scientific information into working

knowledge base. Employees utilize this knowledge in providing patient care and in the participation in planning services and program activities.

Guidelines - includes programmatic, agency, state, or federal guidelines and American Board of Genetics Standards and professional ethics; quality assurance standards; current medical genetics literature.

II. RESPONSIBILITY:

Nature of Instructions - Employees independently plan, monitor and implement activities; receive direction from the Genetic Program Manager or medical genetics unit; family care is coordinated with medical personnel involved.

Nature of Review - Work is reviewed by program manager on a general basis, usually after completion; administrative issues are discussed with supervisor or manager; clinical or technical issues are discussed with medical geneticist.

Scope of Decisions - Directly affect the health and well being of clients and their families; may impact on policies and relationships of other health care providers and programs. Employees may provide direction or instruction to health department staff and other medical providers.

Consequence of Decisions - Communication of genetic information has a major impact on patients' receiving appropriate medical care and making informed reproductive decisions; intervention deals with intricate family and medical problems such as multiple disabilities, catastrophic, terminal, or chronic illness, recurrence risks; consultation and education contributes to knowledge base of medical professionals to promote referrals; research may influence techniques of other professionals and program services.

III. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Scope of Contacts - Includes clients and families, a variety of medical professionals, students, and community agencies.

Nature and Purpose - Employees provide genetic counseling, intervention, education, and referral services to clients and families; didactic consultation and training to community professionals; training of students and medical personnel; participation with program managers, supervisor, and medical center personnel in planning for services.

IV. OTHER WORK DEMANDS:

Work Conditions - Usually in clinics and office settings but may involve visits in clients' home or other settings.

Hazards - Work requires extensive automobile travel; employees may experience hazards in their fieldwork or inclement weather.

IV. RECRUITMENT STANDARDS:

Knowledges, Skills, and Abilities

Thorough knowledge of medical genetics, community techniques, and dynamics of human behavior. Thorough knowledge of the nature of genes, their inheritance patterns, and the concept of risks and recurrence risks.

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Considerable knowledge of governmental and private organizations and resources in the region. General knowledge of laws, regulations, and policies which govern the program. Skill in establishing rapport and communicating genetic information accurately and at a level of comprehension for the patient to prevent misinterpretation. Ability to plan, develop, and present genetic seminars to all levels of health professionals and to students in the university and other settings. Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with clients and families as well as related government agencies, medical or community organizations. Ability to express ideas clearly and concisely and to execute work effectively.

Minimum Training and Experience

Master's degree from genetic associate program from an appropriately accredited institution, eligibility for certification as a Genetic Counselor by the American Board of Medical Genetics and one year of experience in a human service field; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

Special Note

This is a generalized representation of positions in this class and is not intended to identify essential functions per ADA. Examples of work are primarily essential functions of the majority of positions in this class, but may not be applicable to all positions.