

## **Availability, density, and accessibility of genetic counseling services**

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Genetic counselors offer essential diagnostic services, instructive prognostic information, key prenatal care, recurrence risk evaluations, and potentially improved quality of life for their patients, yet their availability, density, and accessibility based on the geographic and socioeconomic factors of their patient populations has yet to be studied in depth. This analysis of ZIP code demographics nationwide provides insight into the surrounding patient populations where genetic counselors practice and identifies the locations where either a scarcity or abundance of genetic counseling services is available. A survey that assesses the clinical experiences of genetic counselors who work with underserved populations further elucidates the challenges associated with counseling such patients, as well as the factors that influence the professional counselor to decide whether to enter a practice that caters primarily to traditionally underserved populations. By determining which populations have limited access to genetic counseling services and the factors that motivate counselors to seek employment in communities where adequate availability of these services is lacking, a proactive course of action has been developed to promote and sustain the accessibility and equality of genetic counseling services in underserved areas nationwide.