

# workshop b1: saturday, march 11

## The Specialty of Genetics: Communicating Our Value to Medical Colleagues

Identifying the educational needs of primary care physicians: What SPRANS grantees and others have learned. N. Hanson. Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center, Seattle, WA.

Many educational programs to teach genetics have been focused on primary care physicians with varying degrees of success. The genetics community sees the need for education very clearly, but the target audience is seldom motivated to learn. Through our own experience with primary care education and the experience of others, we have successful strategies to share.

Attracting primary care physicians to genetics information involves 1) dealing with negative biases up front, 2) exploiting all avenues to the audience, 3) doing a needs assessment for each new audience, 4) using champions that are trusted, 5) offering incentives, and 6) taking advantage of teachable moments.

In order to effect change in the behavior of primary care physicians regarding the use of genetics services, we must be clear about what specific behavior is desired. What we then teach them should be practical and supported. If we are able to show that their patients will be better served and satisfied by the appropriate use of genetics services, they will understand the consequences of not attending to genetic issues.

The ways that genetics professionals serve as a resource to primary care physicians must be tailored to their needs. Tools that are shared must be understandable, current, accurate, and sustainable.

If the genetics community can attract and engage the primary care audience through well-crafted educational efforts, we will eventually be viewed as partners in patient care, similar to other medical specialties.

**"The Primary Care Physician: The Primary Source of Genetic Testing Information"** An Adaptable PowerPoint Teaching Module. R.A. Pagon. University of Washington and Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center, Seattle, WA.

The Primary Care Physician: The Primary Source of Genetic Testing Information is an adaptable slide PowerPoint presentation designed by the GeneTests (Helix) Education Project staff for use by genetics professionals to help their medical colleagues understand the role of genetic services in patient care. The presentation focuses the audience by posing four questions central to the use of genetic services:

- How is genetics relevant to what you do?
- What do your patients want and expect from genetic services?
- What can be involved in genetic testing?
- What resources exist for you and your patients?

Then, using vignettes to illustrate genetic testing issues that arise in prenatal, pediatric and adult patient care, the teaching module develops and answers a series of questions that pertain specifically to genetic testing:

- What kind of genetic test is it?
- How would the genetic test be used?
- Would the genetic test help or hurt my patient?
- How is the genetic test applied in this situation?
- Where can I find a lab that does the test?
- What is involved in ordering this genetic test?
- What other medical professionals could I consult?
- What can be expected from a genetics consultation?

Workshop participants will receive a disk and print out of over 75 slides in PowerPoint that can be adapted to each participant's personal use.

GeneTests and GeneClinics: Teaching Tools for Primary and Specialty Care Providers. B.W. Popovich. Oregon Health Sciences University, Portland, OR.

GeneTests ([www.genetests.org](http://www.genetests.org)) and GeneClinics ([www.geneclinics.org](http://www.geneclinics.org)) are designed to identify genetic counseling and testing issues that direct medical practitioners to genetics professionals and the services they provide. GeneTests and GeneClinics are accessed more than 1300 times per day (November 1999); however, many genetics professionals who use these resources regularly may not be aware of the ways that they can be used in teaching primary and specialty care providers about genetic services. This talk will review:

- The primer of educational materials in the GeneTests section, "Genetic Counseling and Testing", discussing the use of genetic testing in the context of genetic counseling.
- The newly released Genetics Clinic Directory, which allows identification of genetics clinics by geographical location and specialty.
- The "Primary feature" search of GeneTests and "Category search" feature of GeneClinics, which allow viewing of the databases by subsets of diseases (e.g., neuromuscular, deafness, cancer).
- GeneClinics as a "webservice", i.e., a web-based resource that has concise, authoritative and peer-reviewed disease specific information with links to select basic science databases, high-quality patient resources, genetic testing policy statements, PubMed abstracts, and custom Medline searches.