

## **Georgia Healthcare Provider Knowledge, Practice Patterns, and Education Needs regarding Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer**

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Introduction: Genetic counselors primarily rely on referrals from providers to serve patients at risk for Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer syndrome (HBOC). Factors contributing to under or inappropriate referral include lack of awareness of existing guidelines and limited understanding of HBOC. The purpose of this study was to identify knowledge gaps and practice patterns regarding HBOC among primary care providers in Georgia. Methods: A 34 question survey assessing basic HBOC concepts and practice patterns was administered to an anonymous, random sample of 1,000 licensed healthcare providers in Georgia, including family medicine, obstetrics/gynecology (ob/gyn), internal medicine, and midlevel providers (nurse practitioners and physician assistants). Results: 366 providers returned the survey: 32.4% family practice, 26.9% ob/gyn, 18.5% internal medicine and 22.2% midlevel providers. Of respondents, 44% indicate that they refer patients for cancer genetic counseling regarding HBOC. While 89.2% of respondents indicated an average to very high level of confidence in their ability to identify patients at risk for HBOC, only 3.9% correctly selected the highest risk family history. Additionally, 62.2% of providers failed to recognize a sister with a known BRCA mutation as the highest genetic risk for an unaffected woman. A striking percentage of respondents were not aware of paternal inheritance (42.9%) or autosomal dominant inheritance (59.7%) of BRCA mutations. A majority of respondents did not recognize ovarian cancer (77%) and fallopian tube/peritoneal cancer (82%) as risk factors for HBOC. Regarding educational needs, 74% of respondents had never participated in cancer genetics CME sessions, though 81.5% were interested in learning more about cancer genetic risk assessment. Conclusion: These results suggest a significant knowledge gap among Georgia providers regarding HBOC. Targeted continuing education efforts are needed to improve providers' ability to appropriately identify and refer individuals at increased risk for HBOC in the state of Georgia.