

Welcome to the first issue of PAGC News!

We will be bringing you news on upcoming events, genetics entertainment, featured colleagues and more in our new quarterly newsletter. If you have any information that you would like to share including upcoming events, seminars, an exciting new career role, etc, please contact us at : pennsylvaniaGC@gmail.com

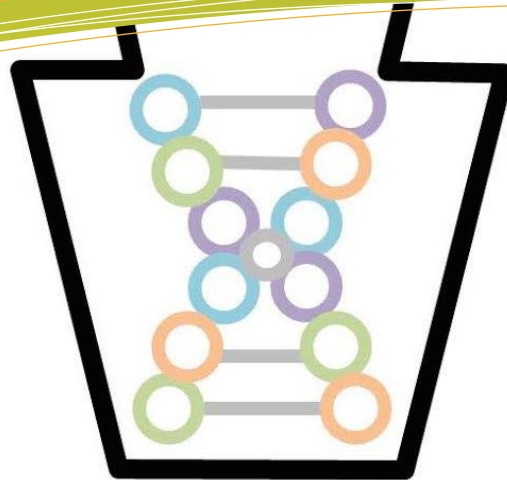
Brought to you by the Membership Committee

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this issue

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Featured Genetic Counselor: Get to Know Amy Sturm

As President-Elect of the NSGC and a respected cardiovascular genetic counselor, many of us have probably heard the name, "Amy Sturm." Here's your chance to learn a little more about Amy.

Amy was attracted to genetic counseling as a career because it afforded her the ability to bring her love of science and genetics directly to people and help utilize this powerful information to prevent disease and save lives. She is a 2001 graduate from the University of Michigan.

When asked if there was a pivotal occurrence that opened a career opportunity for her, she emphatically said, "Yes!" She states that networking has always been key. Her two most recent genetic counseling positions, including her current role at Geisinger and her previous position at Ohio State, were doors she felt that she opened for herself via networking. She took the opportunity to connect, to approach every conversation with intent, and to display her expertise and optimistic attitude. She shares that these types of networking



opportunities are absolutely key to building what you want out of your future as a genetic counselor.

Amy reports that she has seen exponential evolution of opportunities for genetic counselors over the course of her career. There are many areas where genetic counselors have pioneered, including clinical areas like cardiovascular genetics and cancer genetics, as well as newer areas, like polygenic score counseling. She has also witnessed an immense expansion in the types of roles and settings that genetic counselors are working in,

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PAGC EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

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West Regional Representative
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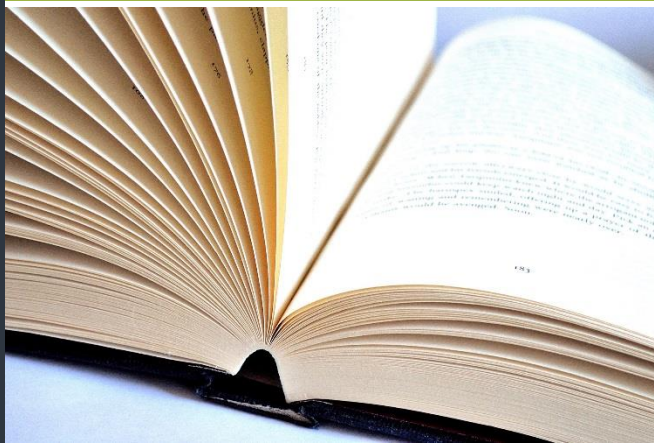
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Mercies in Disguise: A Story of Hope, a Family's Destiny, and the Science that Rescued Them

By Gina Kolata

Gina Kolata is a science reporter for the *New York Times*. She has written an interesting narrative about the Baxley family's quest for a diagnosis of the devastating, progressive neurological condition affecting several family members. Spoiler alert: it's not Huntington's disease, and the segue into the research that identified the biological phenomenon of the condition makes the story compelling. The book explores each descendant's decision to undergo genetic testing and focuses on one daughter's goal to possibly eliminate passing on the pathogenic variant to her children.

The portion of the story of the Baxley family's diagnostic odyssey and decision-making about

genetic testing is one that most genetic counselors have experienced with their patient populations. The portion of the narrative that I found most interesting was the description of the research process to identify the biological cause of the condition. It reinforced the importance of informed consent, ownership of data, and the fine balance between being right or wrong in the opinion of the scientific community.

I thoroughly enjoyed the book, although I'm still not sure about the meaning of the title, "Mercies in Disguise."

-Submitted by Susan Walther

(Cont,d from page 1: Amy Sturm)

which has really broadened many individuals' perspectives about how the genetic counselor skillset and training can be utilized in so many different ways. We asked Amy what she wishes she knew as a recent graduate compared to what she knows now. Her take home message was that, "nothing is forever – not the bad day you're having, or sadly, the great one you are having– BE IN THE MOMENT." She feels excited about the mindfulness in genetic counseling research that she recently has learned about, because it's very important to how we approach our patient care, our work, and our lives in general.

Currently, Amy is the Director of Cardiovascular Genomic Counseling and a Professor at Geisinger's Genomic Medicine Institute. Her current responsibilities include the leadership of the MyCode Genomic Screening and Counseling Program, which is a clinical program dedicated to reporting results from whole exome sequencing on Geisinger's population-based MyCode Community Health Initiative.

Who's Who Behind the PAGC



Each quarter we will feature one of the PAGC's board members so you can get to know who is behind the organization. This quarter the East Regional Representative, Melissa Yelton, MGC, LCGC is in the spotlight.

Melissa is a licensed genetic counselor at Penn State Health Hershey Medical Center. She sees patients in both Pediatric Neurology as well as in Maternal Fetal Medicine for preconception and prenatal genetic counseling. Melissa lectures to medical students, OB/GYN residents and MFM fellows, and Pediatric residents. She also speaks to regional neuromuscular disease support groups. Prior to working at Penn State Health in 2016, she

worked at Pinnacle Health in Maternal Fetal Medicine for 15 years. She graduated with a Master's degree in Genetic Counseling from the University of Maryland, School of Medicine in 2001. She earned a B.A. degree in psychology from Hood College in Frederick, MD. Melissa is a member of the National Society of Genetic Counselors and the American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics.

EYE ON IT

PAGC Membership

It's just about time to **renew** your **PAGC membership!**

Renew to enjoy the benefits of being a member of PAGC. Membership officially expires on December 31, 2018.

The membership renewal page will be available on the PAGC website in October.



Licensure Renewal

Pennsylvania Genetic Counseling licenses expire on December 31, 2018

(biennially on each even numbered year). Renewal forms will be sent by the State Board of Medicine 2-3 months prior to expiration via mail. Be sure your mailing address is correct as the post office will not forward license renewals.

The Members section of the PAGC website is updated with the links to the Pennsylvania Board of Medicine and other licensure-related details. You will need to login to access this section.

LICENSE RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS:

- 30 hours of NSGC/ABGC approved continuing education (3.0 CEUs)
- 2 hours of Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting training. Child abuse clearance must be submitted within 60 days of license renewal. A list of approved Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting training sites can be found at:

<https://www.dos.pa.gov/ProfessionalLicensing/BoardsCommissions/Pages/Act-31.aspx>



Professional Development and Continuing Education

Upcoming Events

- **American Society of Human Genetics Annual Meeting**
October 16-30, 2018 in San Diego, CA.
- **Genetic Counselor Awareness Day**
November 8, 2018.
- **National Society of Genetic Counselors Annual Conference**
November 14-17, 2018 in Atlanta, GA.
- **New England Regional Genetics Group Annual Meeting**
November 29-30, 2018 in Portsmouth, NH.
- **American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics Annual Clinical Genetics Meeting**
April 2-6, 2018 in Seattle WA.
- **PAGC Annual Meeting**
Save the Date: May 9-10, 2019, Harrisburg PA.