

Genetic Counseling Available at No Charge for Rural Colorado Families

The Colorado Department of Health and Environment has teamed with the Marion Downs Hearing Center at the University of Colorado Hospital to provide no-cost genetic counseling to rural families with children with hearing loss through tele-health.

While there are numerous causes of hearing loss, it is estimated that 50% of cases have a genetic basis.

WHAT IS A GENETIC COUNSELOR?

Genetic counselors are masters level healthcare professionals specially trained in the field of medical genetics and counseling. A genetic counselor works as part of a healthcare team to provide information and support about hearing loss to families with children with hearing loss. Specifically, a genetic counselor asks questions about pregnancy, health, development and a child's family in order to figure out the cause of a child's hearing loss. The counselor then reviews the information and discusses genetic testing options with the family. Importantly, genetic testing is optional and all information provided by the genetic counselor is non-directive and unbiased. If a family decides to proceed with genetic testing, the genetic counselor will coordinate this testing and relay results to the family about how these results may impact their family.



Kristina S. Kocsis, MS, CGC is a board certified genetic counselor who practices at The Children's Hospital and University of Colorado Hospital. Her primary clinical interest is the genetics of hearing loss. Ms. Kocsis' professional experiences have included coordination of the Front Range outreach genetics clinics, coordination of specialty clinics, graduate student supervision, and from 2003-2007, contracted with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to help establish a statewide genetics program. One of the program's primary goals included improving awareness of the genetics of hearing loss within the State of Colorado. For the past 7 years, Ms. Kocsis has provided genetic counseling to the multidisciplinary hearing clinics at Children's Hospital Colorado and University of Colorado Hospital where she provides genetic counseling services to families with children who have been recently diagnosed with hearing loss.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND REFERRALS:

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This is an outreach project with the objective to improve service to families with deaf and hard of hard children living in rural Colorado communities. This will be a no-cost service only until December 2011.