

The Genomics and Personalized Medicine Act of 2006
Summary and Comment
Genetic Services Policy Project
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Senator Barack Obama (D-IL) recently introduced a bill titled “Genomics and Personalized Medicine Act of 2006” (S. 3822). The bill is comprehensive in scope, addressing issues ranging from access to existing genetic tests to biobanking and research to encourage the development of new genetic services. As the first piece of legislation to propose federal action over such a broad spectrum of genetics issues, the Act provides a good forum for public discussion about the future we envision for the role of genetics and genetic services in this country.

While much of the funding in S. 3822 is directed at research, the bill also touches on many of the issues associated with change: leadership, the role of stakeholders, timing, funding, cooperation, communication, and public perception. More specifically, the Genomics and Personalized Medicine Act of 2006:

- Provides definitions for key genetics terms (Section 3);
- Creates the Interagency Working Group within the Department of Health and Human Services to expand and accelerate research and the translation of research into clinical and public health application through coordination and communication among relevant federal agencies (Section 4, \$5M in 2007);
- Provides funds for research to include cost effectiveness analysis, translational research, research on public knowledge, the impact of genetic tests on population health and health disparities, as well as basic science research; and for a biobanking initiative (Section 5, \$150M for 2007);
- Encourages expansion of the genetics workforce and the integration of genetics competency into the training of a broad range of clinical and public health professionals (Section 6, \$10M for 2007);
- Provides tax incentives to develop genetic diagnostic tests to make existing and new drugs safer and more effective, and directs a study of additional incentives to encourage development of such tests (\$10M for 2007); increases regulatory oversight of genetic tests, directs the study of direct to consumer marketing of these tests, and funds education of the public about genomics and its health applications (Section 7, \$30M for 2007);
- Authorizes additional funding as needed for each of these initiatives through 2012; and
- Offers the sense of the Senate that the future of personalized medicine depends heavily on federal legislation to assure privacy of genetic information and prohibit discrimination based on this information.

The work of the Genetic Services Policy Project (<http://depts.washington.edu/genpol>) in analyzing the existing genetic services delivery system relates directly to many of the policy issues addressed by Sen. Obama’s legislation. We will tailor our dissemination activities in the coming year to contribute widely to the public discussions S. 3822 will create.