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GENETIC INFORMATION NONDISCRIMINATION ACT (GINA)

The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA) is a federal law that protects individuals from genetic discrimination in health insurance and employment. Genetic discrimination is the misuse of genetic information. GINA prohibits employers from requesting or requiring genetic information of an individual or family member of the individual, except as specifically allowed by this law.

Genetic Information

What is genetic information and why is it important? The genetic information protected by the law includes family health history, the results of genetic tests, the use of genetic counseling and other genetic services, genetic information of a fetus carried by an individual or an individual's family member, an embryo lawfully held by an individual or family member receiving assistive reproductive services, and participation in genetic research.

Why is genetic information important to me? Genetic information helps you know and understand health conditions that run in your family, as well as your risk for developing certain health conditions or having a child with certain conditions. This information can help you make healthy lifestyle choices and important life and medical decisions. It also helps your healthcare provider in providing you the best care possible.

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How does GINA help me? With GINA's protections, you can feel comfortable talking about family health history with your family and healthcare providers. You may choose to use genetic testing and other services to learn about health risks without fear of genetic discrimination.

Under GINA and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), all medical information collected by an employer, including genetic information must be kept in a confidential, separate medical record.

