



Canadian Association of Genetic Counsellors
Executive Summary



Facts About Genetic Counsellors

Did you know...?

- ✓ Genetic counsellors work in a variety of settings, including but not limited to university medical centres, private and public hospitals/medical facilities, diagnostic laboratories, health maintenance organizations, not-for-profit organizations, and government organizations and agencies.
- ✓ Genetic counsellors work in multiple areas of practice, including pediatrics, prenatal, cancer, metabolic disease, neurology, cardiology, infertility, pharmacogenetics, genomic medicine, and others.
- ✓ Increasing demands for genetic expertise in varied fields provides genetic counsellors new ways of using their training in genetic counselling. These include working in administration, basic and behavioural research, public and professional education, educational content development and editing, public health, private industry, laboratory support, public policy, public relations and consulting.
- ✓ The average salary for a full-time genetic counsellor is \$106,583 CAD¹ but can exceed \$150,000 CAD, depending on specialty area, training, and experience.
- ✓ Eighty-nine percent of genetic counsellors have a Master's degree in human genetics or genetic counselling.
- ✓ Seventy-nine percent of genetic counsellors report being satisfied with the profession.
- ✓ The Canadian Association of Genetic Counsellors (CAGC), founded in 1987, promotes high standards of practice, facilitating and supporting professional growth and increasing public awareness of the genetic counselling profession in Canada.
- ✓ The Canadian Board of Genetic Counselling (CBGC) and American Board of Genetic Counseling (ABGC) are not-for-profit organizations that certify and recertify genetic counsellors in North America.
- ✓ The Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC) accredits genetic counselling training programs. As of December 2024, there are 63 accredited training programs in the U.S. and Canada².

¹ Data from the 2024 PSS. Statistical outliers (extremely high and low salaries) were removed before analyses were performed using an Interquartile Range Rule of 3.

² <https://www.gceducation.org/>.

About the Survey

The Canadian Association of Genetic Counsellors (CAGC) administers a Professional Status Survey (PSS) to its members. The first formal survey was conducted in 1991 and every five years thereafter. The first surveys were short, addressing mostly demographic information, while subsequent surveys expanded to cover other areas (training and certification, satisfaction). The PSS is intended to capture the current working environment and professional activities of genetic counsellors in Canada. Archived versions of PSS are on the CAGC website.

In 2018, the CAGC partnered with the National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC) to collaborate on the development and administration of the PSS. The goal is for the NSGC and CAGC to continue to partner for future PSS cycles to better capture the genetic counselling profession data in a comprehensive fashion, reduce the need for Canadian genetic counsellors to respond to multiple surveys and increase the overall response rate to both workforce surveys. CAGC PSS Representatives serve on the NSGC PSS Subcommittee to ensure survey development is aligned with CAGC nuances and healthcare practices in Canada. The full report is an analysis specific to respondents who live and work in Canada. Previous CAGC PSS reports in collaboration with the NSGC report have been completed in 2018, 2020 and 2022.

Of the 2,618 respondents to the 2024 PSS, 231 (9%) reside in Canada. Among those, 219 (95%) also work in Canada, and the rest work in the U.S.

This report shows information for genetic counsellors who live and work in Canada.

Unless otherwise stated, the analysis is based on the 219 respondents, although not all respondents answered each question.

The 2024 PSS

The PSS was administered from January 3, 2024, through February 29, 2024, to eligible genetic counsellors who are either Full, Emeritus, or New Genetic Counselor Members of the NSGC, members of the Canadian Association of Genetic Counsellors (CAGC) and/or diplomates of the American Board of Genetic Counseling (ABGC) and/or Canadian Board of Genetic Counselling. The 2024 PSS survey collects data about the genetic counselling profession from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023.

A total of 2,690 completed surveys³ were received from the 7,149 solicited from four organizations, resulting in a 38% response rate⁴.

³ Of the 2,690 completed surveys, 72 did not authorize use of their data. The total number of surveys available for analysis was 2,618.

⁴ Most recent PSS response rates: 2023 PSS (45%), 2022 PSS (45%) 2021 PSS (55%) 2020 PSS (50%) 2019 PSS (49%) 2018 PSS (53%).

Canadian Respondents

The CAGC identified 617 individuals eligible to complete the 2024 PSS. Among all survey respondents (2,690), 219 live and work in Canada. An exact response rate cannot be calculated as PSS respondents cannot be verified against the CAGC distribution list.

Demographic Data

Ethnic and racial demographic data, and information about sexual orientation, gender identity (SOGI) and disability status have been collected through the PSS over the years, with the definitions and scope of data collected continually evolving. To date, these data have been analyzed and reported in a limited capacity, yielding descriptive statistics only.

Geographic Data

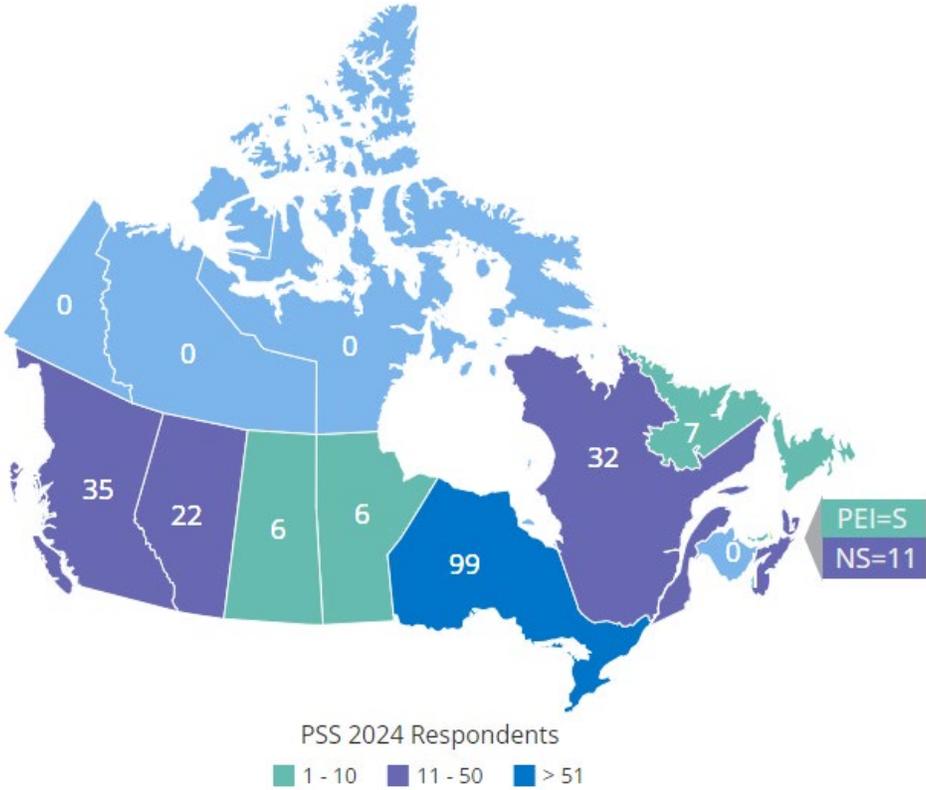
The 2024 PSS asked respondents to provide the postal codes of their work location and their employers. Descriptive and comparative geographical data seen throughout the series of PSS reports are derived from the work location postal codes reported by genetic counsellors.

Demographics

Geographic Location

The majority of respondents work in Ontario (45%), followed by British Columbia (16%) and Quebec (15%).

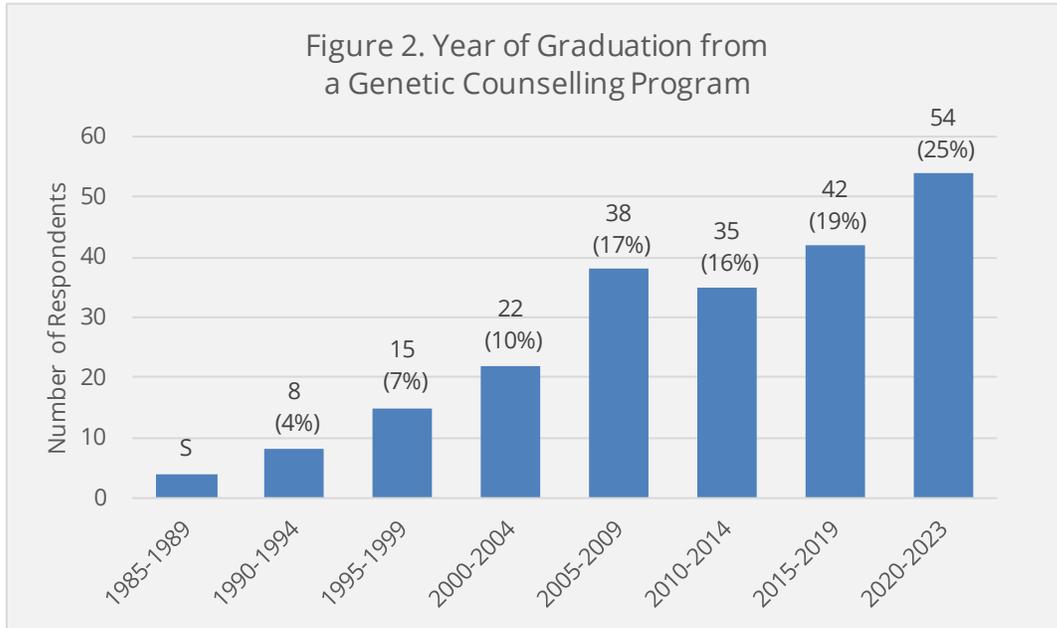
Figure 1. PSS Respondents



"S" denotes suppressed cases where N<5.

Graduation Year

One quarter (25%) of 2024 PSS respondents graduated from genetic counselling programs within the last three years, and 44% within the last seven years. This is consistent with previous administrations of the PSS. Of the 219 PSS respondents, 218 answered this question.



"5" denotes suppressed cases where N<5.

Race/Ethnicity

Race/ethnicities of 2024 PSS respondents are shown below. Jewish was added to this year's survey in the race/ethnicity section⁵. Eighty-nine percent of respondents identified as one race/ethnicity, 10% as two race/ethnicities and 1% as three or more race/ethnicities. Of the 219 PSS respondents, 218 indicated at least one race/ethnicity.

Table 1. Respondent Race/Ethnicity	N	%
White	182	83%
North American (e.g., European-American, European-Canadian)	130	72%
Northern European (e.g., Danish, Finn, Icelandic, Norwegian, Swedish, British)	52	29%
Western European (e.g., Austrian, Belgian, Dutch, French, German, Swiss)	36	20%
Eastern European (e.g., Bulgarian, Czech, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian)	28	16%
Southern European (e.g., Albanian, Bosnian, Croatian, Greek, Italian)	13	7%
Prefer to self-describe	6	3%
Prefer not to answer	0	0%

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⁵ The 2024 PSS is the first survey to include Jewish as a separate race/ethnicity category.

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Asian	35	16%
East Asian (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Mongolian)	16	53%
South Asian (e.g., Bangladeshi, Indian, Nepalese, Pakistani)	9	30%
Southeast Asian (e.g., Cambodian, Filipino, Indonesian, Vietnamese)	S	--
Prefer to self-describe	S	--
Prefer not to answer	0	0%
Jewish	12	6%
Ashkenazi	12	100%
Sephardic	0	0%
Mizrahi	0	0%
Prefer to self-describe	0	0%
Prefer not to answer	0	0%
Middle Eastern or North African (MENA)	6	3%
West Asian (e.g., Bahraini, Iraqi, Jordanian, Kuwaiti, Lebanese, Omani, Palestinian, Qatari, Saudi Arabian, Syrian, Emiratis and Yemeni)	6	100%
North African (e.g., Algerian, Egyptian, Libyan, Moroccan, Sudanese, Tunisian)	0	0%
Prefer to self-describe	0	0%
Prefer not to answer	0	0%
Black, African American or of African descent	S	--
African Caribbean (e.g., Haitian, Jamaican, Bahamian)	S	--
African American and/or African Canadian	S	--
African (e.g., Ethiopian, Ghanaian, Nigerian, Somali)	S	--
Prefer to self-describe	0	0%
Prefer not to answer	0	0%
Hispanic or Latine	S	--
Central or South American (e.g., Argentinian, Colombian, Guatemalan, Nicaraguan)	S	--
North American (e.g., Mexican)	S	--
Caribbean (e.g., Cuban, Dominican, Puerto Rican)	S	--
Spaniard	S	--
Prefer to self-describe	0	0%
Prefer not to answer	0	0%
American Indian	0	0%
American Indian (e.g. Blackfeet, Cherokee, Navajo, Ojibway)	0	0%
Alaska Native (e.g. Haida, Inupiat, Yupik)	0	0%
Central or South American Indian (e.g. Aztec, Aymara, Guarani, Quechua)	0	0%
Indigenous Peoples of Canada (e.g. First Nations, Métis, Inuit)	0	0%
Prefer to self-describe	0	0%
Prefer not to answer	0	0%
Prefer to self-describe	8	4%
Total	218	

Respondents could select more than one race/ethnicity. Percentages reflect the total number of respondents indicating each item divided by the total number who responded to the question. "S" denotes suppressed cases where N<5.

Gender Identity

Among the 219 respondents to the PSS, 95% identify as women, 4% identify as men, and the remaining 1% identify as agender, fluid, genderqueer, non-binary or questioning.

Sexual Orientation

Ninety percent identify as heterosexual/straight, and the rest as either queer, bisexual, gay or lesbian, pansexual/omnisexual/polysexual, or questioning.

More survey demographic information in the full report:

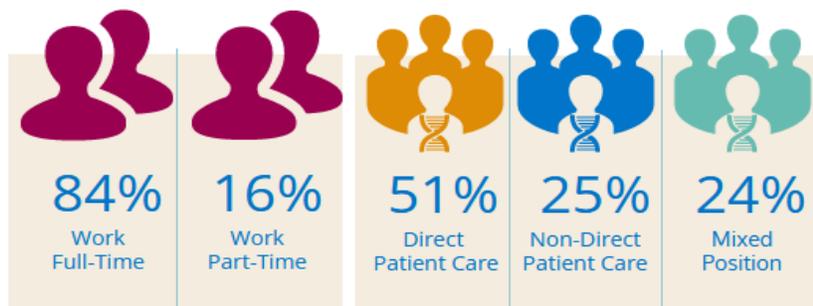
- Degrees
- Genetic counselling programs
- Years of experience
- Certifications
- Age
- CAGC membership
- Languages spoken
- Disability status

Work Environment

Type of Position

Most respondents have just one employer (83%), 15% have two employers, and the rest have more than two employers.

Eighty-four percent work in full-time positions (defined as 37.5 or more hours per week), and 16% part-time. Among those who worked part-time, 61% reported that part-time work was their preference long-term, 17% were working part-time on a temporary basis, and 11% of part-time workers desired a full-time position but it was not available in their area or institution.



Direct patient care: A role that primarily involved counselling patients.

Non-direct patient care: A role that does not involve counselling patients.

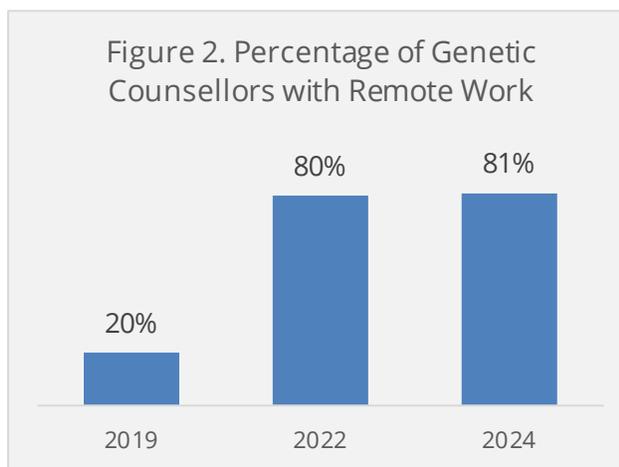
Mixed position: A role that is a mix of providing direct patient care and non-direct patient care duties.

Employer Work Setting

Genetic counsellors who responded to the 2024 PSS reported working for a wide variety of employer types. Sixty-eight percent of genetic counsellors who responded to the PSS work in hospital settings. As would be expected, those who provide direct patient care were more likely to be employed by a hospital or other medical setting than those in non-direct patient care or mixed positions. Conversely, those in non-direct patient care positions were more likely to be employed by a commercial laboratory or at a university.

Remote Work

One hundred and seventy-seven (81%) of the 219 PSS respondents reported they worked remotely for some portion of the time in 2023⁶. This compares to 80% in 2021⁷ and 20% who reported working remotely in 2019⁸, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Among this year's 177 PSS respondents who work remotely, 63% hold a hybrid position that requires some in-person days, 19% can decide on the amount of remote work, and 18% hold positions that are only remote with no in-person option.



Areas of Practice

Cancer Genetics (Adult), Adult Genetics and Prenatal were the top three practice areas cited by genetic counsellors.

Table 2. Top 5 Practice Areas	Direct patient care		Non-direct patient care		Mixed position		All Positions	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Cancer Genetics - Adult	54	48%	7	13%	20	38%	81	37%
General Adult Genetics	53	47%	S	--	12	23%	68	31%
Prenatal	42	37%	6	11%	12	23%	60	27%
Pediatrics	32	28%	5	9%	13	25%	50	23%
Cardiology	26	23%	5	9%	13	25%	44	20%

S* denotes suppressed cases where N<5.

⁶ As reported on the 2024 PSS.

⁷ As reported on the 2022 PSS.

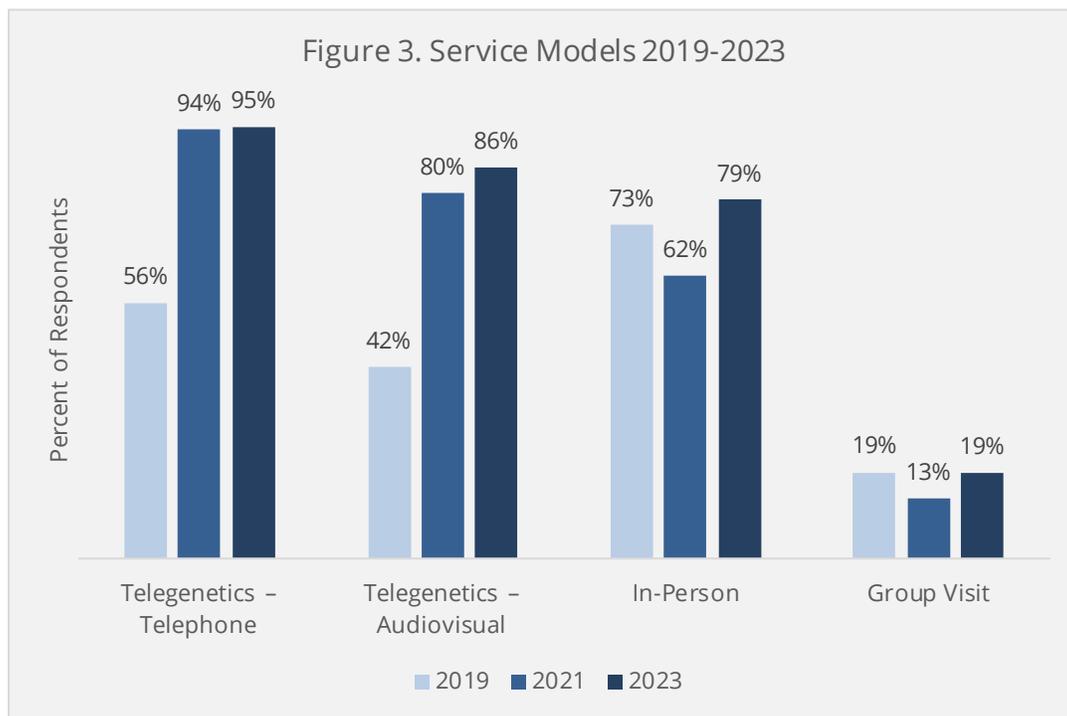
⁸ As reported on the 2020 PSS.

More information about genetic counsellors' work environments in the full report:

- Work setting
- Time in current position
- Job title
- Roles
- Number of genetic counsellors in work environment
- Percentage of time working remotely
- Reasons for remote work
- Primary practice areas
- Number of practice areas
- Years in primary area of practice
- Extra work hours by job classification

Service Delivery and Access

The most common service delivery model reported by genetic counsellors who delivered direct patient care in 2023⁹ was telegenetics-telephone (95%). This is a significant increase from the 56% who used telephone delivery in 2019¹⁰. Eighty-six percent utilized telegenetics-audiovisual compared with 42% in 2019. In-person delivery was used by 79% of genetic counsellors in 2023 compared to 73% in 2019. Group delivery was used by 19% of genetic counsellors in 2019 and in 2023.



Respondents could select more than one item. Percentages reflect the total number of respondents indicating each item divided by the total number who responded to the question.

⁹ As reported on the 2024 CAGC PSS.

¹⁰ As reported on the 2020 CAGC PSS.

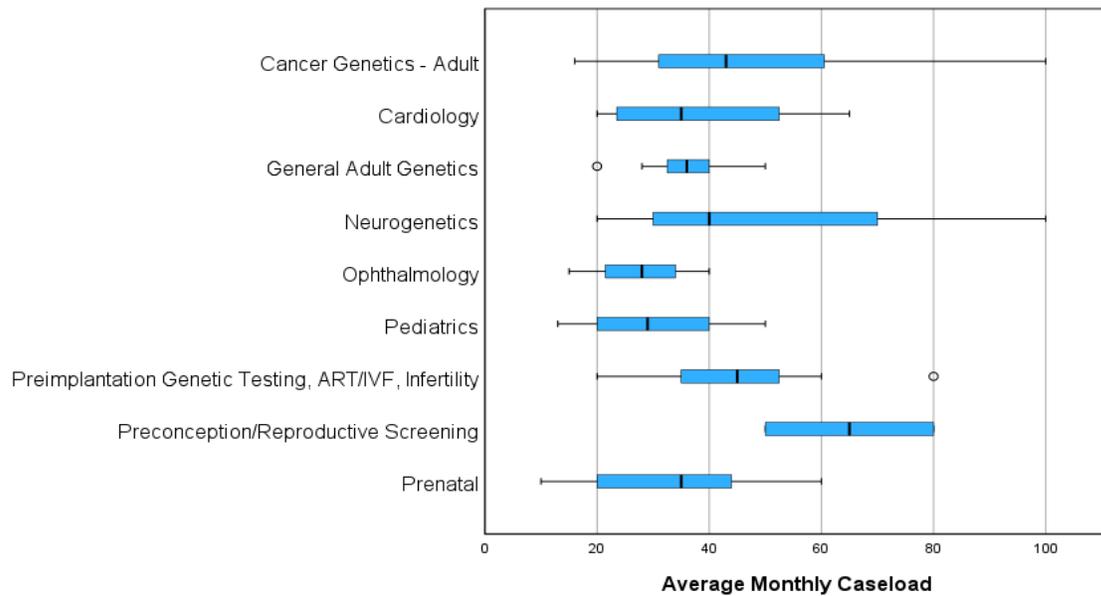
Weekly Patient Caseload

Respondents to the PSS who work full-time and provide direct patient care¹¹ reported average weekly visits of 6.0 new patients and 4.8 established patients¹². Responses ranged from 1 to 18 weekly new patient visits and 1 to 15 established patient visits, after outliers were removed from the analyses. These averages include all areas of practice and types of service delivery (in-person, phone, web-based/video, and group sessions).

Monthly Patient Caseload

The average monthly caseload reported on the PSS 2024 was 41.7, compared to 52.1 in 2022, 49.7 in 2020 and 51.9 in 2018. These averages include all areas of practice and types of service delivery (in-person, phone, web-based/video, and group sessions).

Figure 4. Monthly Caseload



¹¹ Includes genetic counsellors in mixed positions who provide direct patient care more than 50% of the time.

¹² Results show genetic counsellors who reported one or more visits. Zeros were not used in these analyses because they would artificially deflate averages for patient visits. Outliers were removed from the analyses.

Patient Wait Times

Genetic counsellors are able to meet with patients sooner if physician involvement is not required. Of the 219 PSS respondents, 114 work full-time in direct care positions. Among these, 111 reported their next available time for a new patient to see a genetic counsellor only, 110 reported their next available time for an established patient to see a genetic counsellor only, and 111 reported their next available time for a stat/emergent patient to see a genetic counsellor only.

Table 4. Next Available Appointment to See Genetic Counsellor Only	New patients		Established patients		Stat/Emergent patients	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<1 week	22	20%	49	45%	82	74%
1-4 weeks	17	15%	30	27%	17	15%
1-2 months	16	14%	10	9%	S	--
3-6 months	18	16%	6	5%	0	0%
7-12 months	7	6%	S	--	0	0%
>1 year	22	20%	S	--	S	--
N/A	5	5%	S	--	7	6%
Unsure	S	--	S	--	S	--
Total	111	100%	110	100%	111	100%

Percentages have been rounded and might not equal 100%. "S" denotes suppressed cases where N<5.

More information about service delivery and access in the full report:

- Weekly and monthly caseloads by specialty and province
- Caseloads for remote workers
- Time spent on patient care
- Administrative time
- Patient referrals
- Medical specialties of referrers
- Languages used in service delivery
- Number of service models used
- Physician involvement
- Test ordering patterns

Salary and Benefits

Full-time Salaries

Of the 219 respondents, 102 (47%)¹³ provided salary information. Of these, 88 worked full-time, and their average salary was \$106,538 CAD. This compares to \$98,209 CAD in 2021¹⁴, \$95,104 in 2019¹⁵ \$87,526 CAD in 2017¹⁶. The province with the highest average salary where N>5 was British Columbia (\$125,722 CAD) and the lowest average salary was Quebec (\$87,600 CAD).

The full report contains a detailed report of genetic counsellor salaries in Canadian dollars.

\$106,538 CAD
Average salary for full-time Canadian genetic counselors
2024 PSS

Benefits

The percentages of respondents who had the option to receive specific benefits are shown below. These are the top ten benefits that were included in respondents' benefits packages, regardless of whether the respondents elected to use the benefit.

Table 5. Top 10 Benefits	All Positions		Full-time		Part-time	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Dental insurance	168	80%	147	84%	21	58%
Health insurance	159	76%	136	78%	23	64%
Disability (short or long term) insurance	152	72%	132	76%	20	56%
Pension	149	71%	125	72%	24	67%
Employee Assistance Program	140	67%	121	70%	19	53%
Life insurance	139	66%	119	68%	20	56%
Paid maternity/parental leave	135	64%	118	68%	17	47%
Vision plan	129	61%	114	66%	15	42%
Accidental death and dismemberment insurance	127	60%	108	62%	19	53%
Continuing education/conference funding	110	52%	97	56%	13	36%

¹³ This compares to 83% of PSS 2024 respondents (includes U.S. participants) who shared salary information.

¹⁴ As reported on the 2022 PSS.

¹⁵ As reported on the 2020 PSS.

¹⁶ As reported on the 2018 PSS.

The full report contains more information about salaries and compensation by:

- Certification status
- Primary area of practice
- Degree type
- Job classification
- Job title
- Work setting
- Years of experience
- Gender
- Role
- Province

Also:

- Bonuses and commissions
- Supplemental income
- Total cash compensation
- Extra hours worked
- Attempts to increase salary
- Raises
- Reasons for pay raise
- PTO and sick time
- Conference funding
- Employer-funded contributions

Research and Professional Activities

Research Activities and Publications

Sixty percent of the 219 PSS respondents (132/219 PSS respondents) engaged in research activities in 2023. The most common research activities were writing and/or contributing to a manuscript, serving as a research collaborator, and presenting research-related work at professional conferences.

Forty-nine percent of genetic counsellors (108/219 PSS respondents) reported that they published in 2023. The most common publications were abstracts and posters, articles or case reports, and peer-reviewed original research.

Professional Activities

Seventy-four percent of genetic counsellors (161/219 PSS respondents) reported that they engaged in professional activities in 2023.

Table 6. Top 5 Professional Activities	N	%
Served as a volunteer of NSGC, ABGC, ACGC, AGCPD, ASHG, ACMG, CAGC, CBGC or another not-for-profit organization related to the genetic counselling profession	76	50%
Developed genetics curriculum for students/teachers	54	36%
Developed or organized a conference, workshop, or symposium for health professionals (including NSGC conference activities)	36	24%
Served on board of NSGC, ABGC, ACGC, AGCPD, ASHG, ACMG, CAGC, CBGC or another not-for-profit organization related to the genetic counselling profession	23	15%
Served as a reviewer for other peer-reviewed journals	22	14%

More workforce information in the full report:

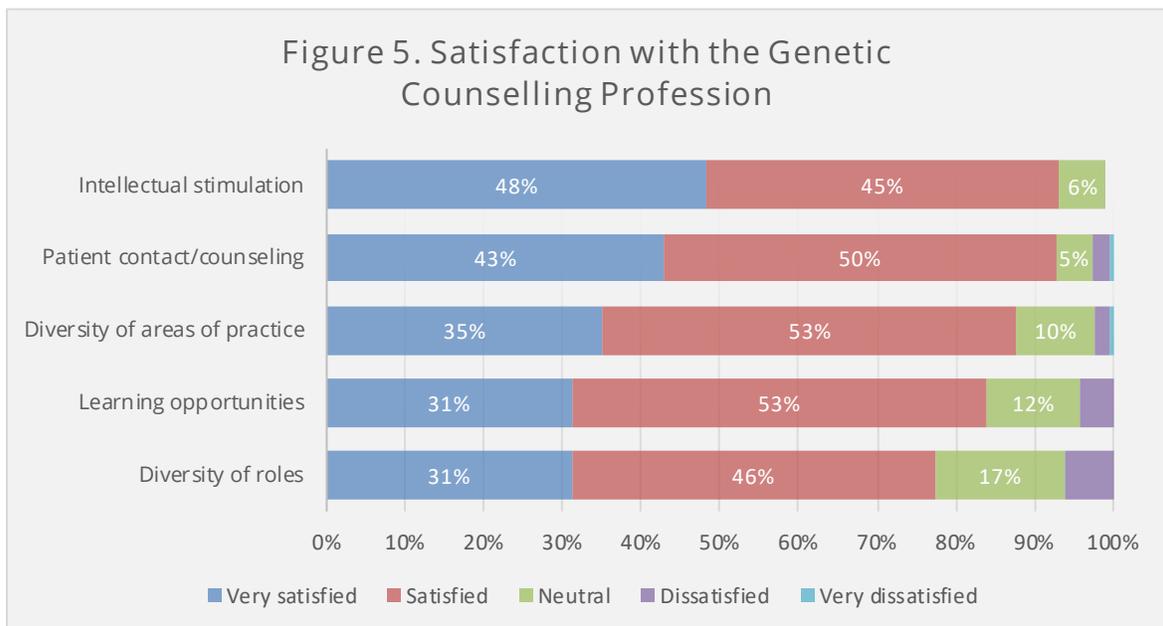
- Faculty status, appointments, titles, and work settings
- Grant funding
- Changes to position types
- Changes to time spent on direct patient care
- Reasons for leaving the profession
- Presentations at professional meetings
- Full tables on research, publications and professional activities

Satisfaction and Inclusivity

Satisfaction with the Profession

Respondents to the PSS were asked to rate their levels of satisfaction with various aspects of the genetic counselling profession. The majority of genetic counsellors who responded to the 2024 PSS (79%) reported they are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the genetic counselling profession overall¹⁷. This high level of satisfaction exists regardless of position type (direct patient care, non-direct patient care, or mixed).

Respondents were most satisfied with the intellectual stimulation of the profession and patient contact/counselling.

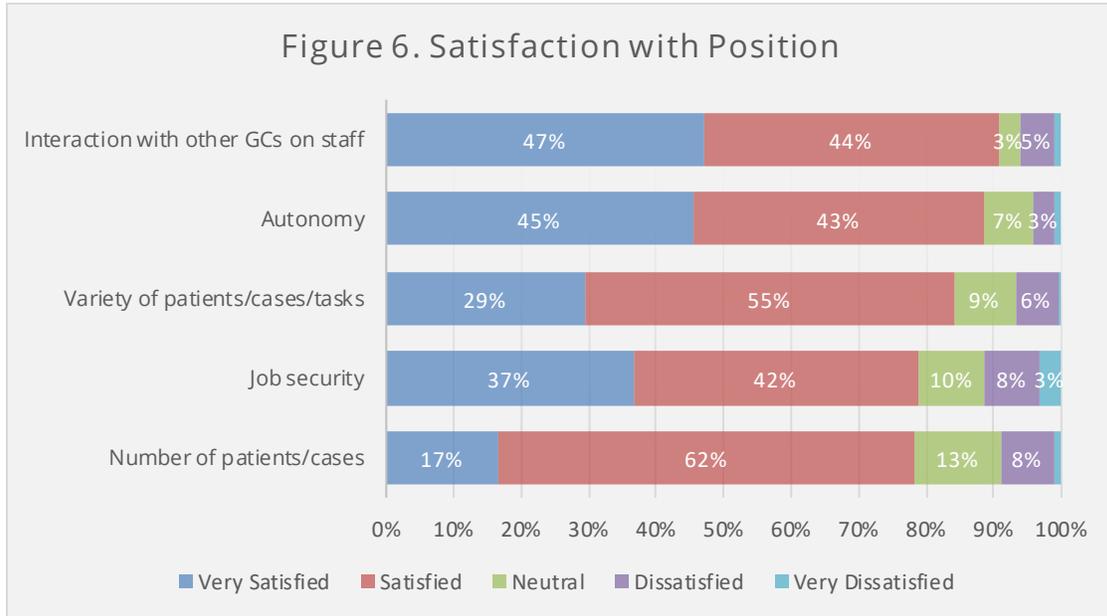


Percentages <3% are not displayed on this figure.

¹⁷ This compares to 83% in 2022, 90% in 2020 and 85% in 2018.

Satisfaction with Current Position

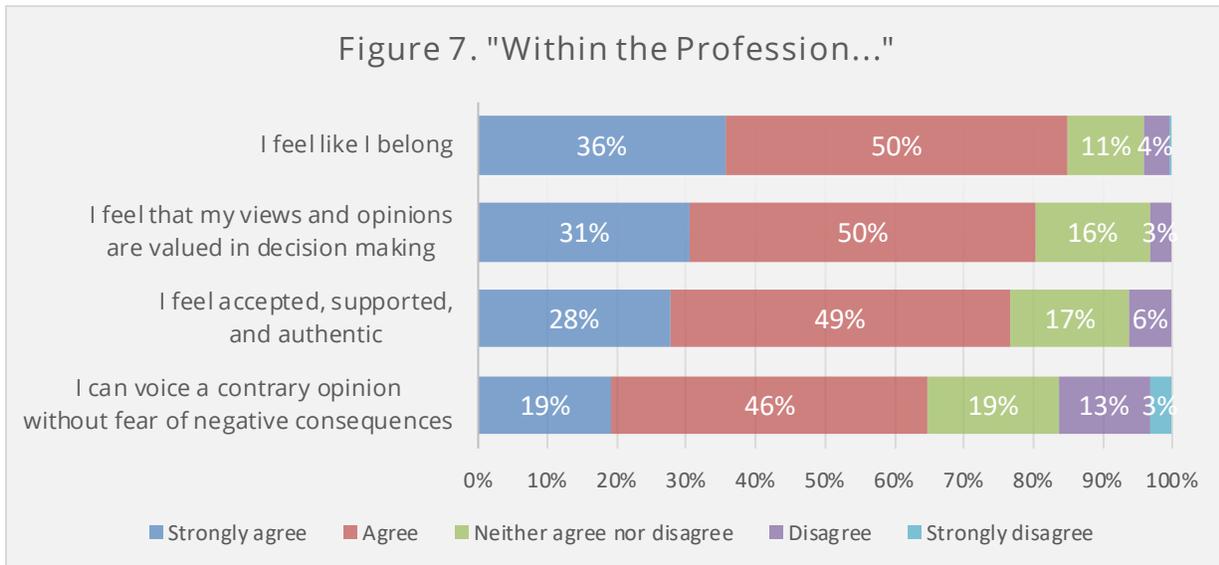
Genetic counsellors who responded to the PSS were generally satisfied with their current positions; 79% were “satisfied” or “very satisfied.”



Percentages <3% are not displayed on this figure.

Inclusion within the Profession

When asked about the genetic counselling profession, respondents were more likely to agree with the statements “I feel like I belong” and significantly less likely to agree that “I can voice a contrary opinion without fear of negative consequences” ($p < .01$). There were no statistically different responses by position type.



More information about satisfaction with the genetic counselling profession and positions in the full report:

- Full tables for profession and positions
- Diversity and inclusion by position, profession and job

Learn More

In addition to the Executive Summary, the full Canadian 2022 PSS report is available to CAGC members and can be found on the CAGC website: <https://www.cagc-accg.ca/>. **The full report is also available to non-members for a fee; please contact the CAGC if you would like to purchase a copy of the report:** cagcoffice@cagc-accg.ca

Data Analysis and Methodology

Survey Administration

The 2024 PSS was administered online by Savanta, a data, market research and advisory company. Hundreds of real-time and server-side validation checks were built into the survey instrument to ensure client-side data accuracy. These validation checks flag data that are significantly out of expected range. To ensure reporting of accurate data, survey respondents were able to answer questions, review previous answers, modify responses and return to the survey multiple times to complete it at their convenience.

Data Analysis & Methodology

The online administration of the PSS was completed in February 2024. The survey data were independently analyzed by Boston Information Solutions using SPSS¹⁸ version 29. The data were further validated to eliminate inconsistencies, duplicates, outliers, input errors and other data anomalies. Frequencies and means reported are based on the number of respondents who answered the specific question. Statistical comparisons of group differences, such as t-tests and chi-square procedures, are reported as significant if $p < 0.05$. Percentages reported are often rounded for readability.

Data Anonymization and Privacy

Efforts are made to protect genetic counsellors' identities, and respondents are informed that they have the option of skipping questions (e.g., salary information). When $N < 10$ responses, additional measures are taken to protect individuals' anonymity. Over the past two decades, the NSGC and CAGC have adhered to a strict policy whereby no aggregate salary information will be shared when $N < 5$ or in cases where any individual or group of genetic counsellors might be personally identified in the PSS reports. Starting this year, the CAGC has implemented a policy for all data where $N < 5$, cases are suppressed and designated with an "S" to ensure anonymity. Raw PSS data are never shared with the PSS committee members or genetic counsellors engaged in research activities, and the data is not available to staff of NSGC or CAGC. PSS data are collected and analyzed by professionals with no affiliation to the NSGC or CAGC and who are not in the genetic counselling community.

Salary Data

Information about the salaries of genetic counsellors is one of the most frequently used chapters of the PSS. To increase the utility of this data, the 2024 PSS asked about respondents' additional cash compensation in addition to base salary¹⁹. The accuracy and specificity of the compensation analyses depend on the willingness of genetic counsellors to divulge this sensitive information and trust that it will be held in the strictest confidence.

Over the past two decades, the NSGC and CAGC have adhered to a strict policy whereby no aggregate salary information will be shared when the number of respondents is fewer than 5 ($N < 5$) or in cases where any individual or group of genetic counsellors might be personally identified. When the number

¹⁸ IBM-SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) is a widely used program for statistical analysis in social science.

¹⁹ The 2022 PSS was the first to include questions about total cash compensation.

of respondents for a specific subcategory is between five or nine (N=5-9), only median and average salary data are reported to maintain privacy of genetic counsellors with outlier salary values.

Statistical outliers (extremely high and low salaries) were removed before analyses were performed using an Interquartile Range Rule of 3. Unless otherwise noted, salary comparisons are for full-time genetic counsellors (part-time salaries were not converted into full-time equivalents).

Acknowledgements

CAGC wishes to recognize and extend gratitude to the many genetic counsellors of the NSGC and CAGC PSS Committees who volunteered their time and expertise for survey creation and management. We also thank CAGC Administrator, Sheryl Keenan, who facilitated CAGC PSS communications and helped generate the PSS distribution list for genetic counsellors working in Canada. Finally, we thank the CAGC PSS Committee and CAGC Board of Director Liaisons, who authored and edited the 2024 PSS Canada Report. This Canada report has been reviewed and approved by the CAGC Board of Directors.

CAGC PSS Committee:

Kirsten Bartels, MSc, CCGC (Co-chair)

Melanie Care, MSc, CCGC (Co-chair)

Sarah Muir, MS, CGC

CAGC Board of Director Liaisons:

Jessica Hartley, MS, CGC

Diane Myles-Reid, MSc, CGC

Tina Babineau-Sturk, MSc, CCGC

The mission of the Canadian Association of Genetic Counsellors is to promote high standards of practice, encourage professional growth and increase public awareness of the genetic counselling profession in Canada.

The full Canada 2024 PSS report is available to CAGC members and can be found on the CAGC website:

<https://www.cagc-accg.ca/>

This year's full report addresses more than 200 questions in the following areas: • Genetic Counsellor Preparation and Education • Professional Status/Work Environment • Service Delivery • Salary and Benefits • Board Certification/Licensure/Credentialing • Career Advancement • Professional Activities • Satisfaction and Inclusivity.

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