Genomic Institute & Pathology Queensland

Genetic Testing Stewardship (GeTS) Program

What is the Genetic Testing Stewardship (GeTS) Program?
Genetic testing is becoming an established part of healthcare across many medical specialties. The GeTS Program aims to improve patient outcomes and use of healthcare resources by supporting the most effective ordering of genetic testing. The team will:

- Respond to enquiries from clinicians who have determined that genetic testing is indicated for their patient but who are unsure about how to proceed.
- Review genetic tests processed through Pathology Queensland. Where there is indication of inappropriate or incomplete testing processes, the test will be ‘no tested’ and further information will be required.

Why is the GeTS Program being introduced?
Genetic testing is playing an increasingly important role in the diagnosis and management of health conditions for patients and their families. Uptake of this technology by non-genetic clinicians has the potential to improve patient outcomes through timely access to genetic testing and continuity of care with their known health care provider. However, limited knowledge and low confidence are known barriers to this uptake. Genetic testing can also be high-cost; therefore it is important that it be appropriately targeted to maximise use of healthcare resources. The GeTS Program aims to support non-genetic clinicians in the uptake of this technology while also ensuring its cost-effective use.

What support is provided by the GeTS Team?
The treating clinician remains the clinical contact for their patient and will continue to perform the clinical assessment, clarify the differential diagnoses, and determine if genetic testing is indicated. If indicated, the clinician then initiates the genetic test request process.

If the clinician is unclear about the actions required, they can contact the GeTS Team for assistance with:
- Choice of genetic test;
- Choice of testing laboratory;
- Consent processes;
- Test request processes.

Once the result is returned, the GeTS Team can assist with:
- Understanding the terminology of the genetic test reports.

The GeTS Program will also provide a suite of resources to support genetic testing (e.g. consent forms, pathology forms, genetic testing guides). If further discussion or advice is required, the clinician may refer their patient to Genetic Health Queensland (metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/rbwh/genetic-health-queensland).

What support is not provided by the GeTS program?
The GeTS program does not replace a formal clinical genetics assessment. Where specialist input is required for clinical assessment of the patient, interpretation of the genetic test results, or discussions with the patient and their family members, the patient will need to be referred to Genetic Health Queensland or another clinical genetics service.

Program duration
A pilot program to develop models and processes and then assess effectiveness of this approach has been funded by MNHHS Link funding. This pilot program will focus on Metro North Health genetic test requests and will run until June 2022. The program will be evaluated, and a proposal developed for sustainability and expansion across all Queensland Hospital and Health services.

For further information or to book a short information session for your team, contact the GeTS team on 3646 4580 or Genetic_Stewardship@health.qld.gov.au