



Telehealth and Medical Genetics Services in Washington State

WA State Telehealth Collaborative

July 17, 2023

Fuki M. Hisama MD, FAAN, FACMG

Medical Director, Genetic Medicine

Professor of Medicine (Medical Genetics)

University of Washington School of Medicine

UW Genetic Medicine Clinic founded in 1959

Our firsts put you first

**You're at the first hospital in the U.S.
to create a genetic medicine clinic.**

Dr. Arno Motulsky established UW Medical Center's Genetic Medicine Clinic in 1959. The clinic was created to provide genetic counseling for people with inherited medical conditions. Today, as the only genetics clinic for adults in the Pacific Northwest, it offers the full range of evaluation, diagnosis, counseling and care for all genetic and genomic disorders.

UW Medicine
A higher degree of healthcare



Human Genomes are 99.9% identical



The 0.1% Difference Contributes to Human Genetic Diseases



- Genetic Medicine
- Improving health through genetics and genomics.

>7,000 human genetic diseases have been discovered

Genetics Clinicians

- **MD geneticist**
- 4 years of medical school
- 3-4 years of Peds, Medicine, OB-GYN, etc.
- 2 years of Medical Genetics training.
- 9+ years of education
- 5 national cert exams
- **MD with dual board certification.**
- **Genetic counselor**
- 18-24 months grad school.
- WA state Chapter 18.290 RCW
- Requires collaborative agreement with MD.
- 1 national cert exam.
- **MS with certification in Genetic counseling.**
- CMS does not recognize GCs as HCP.

Genetics Across the Life Span

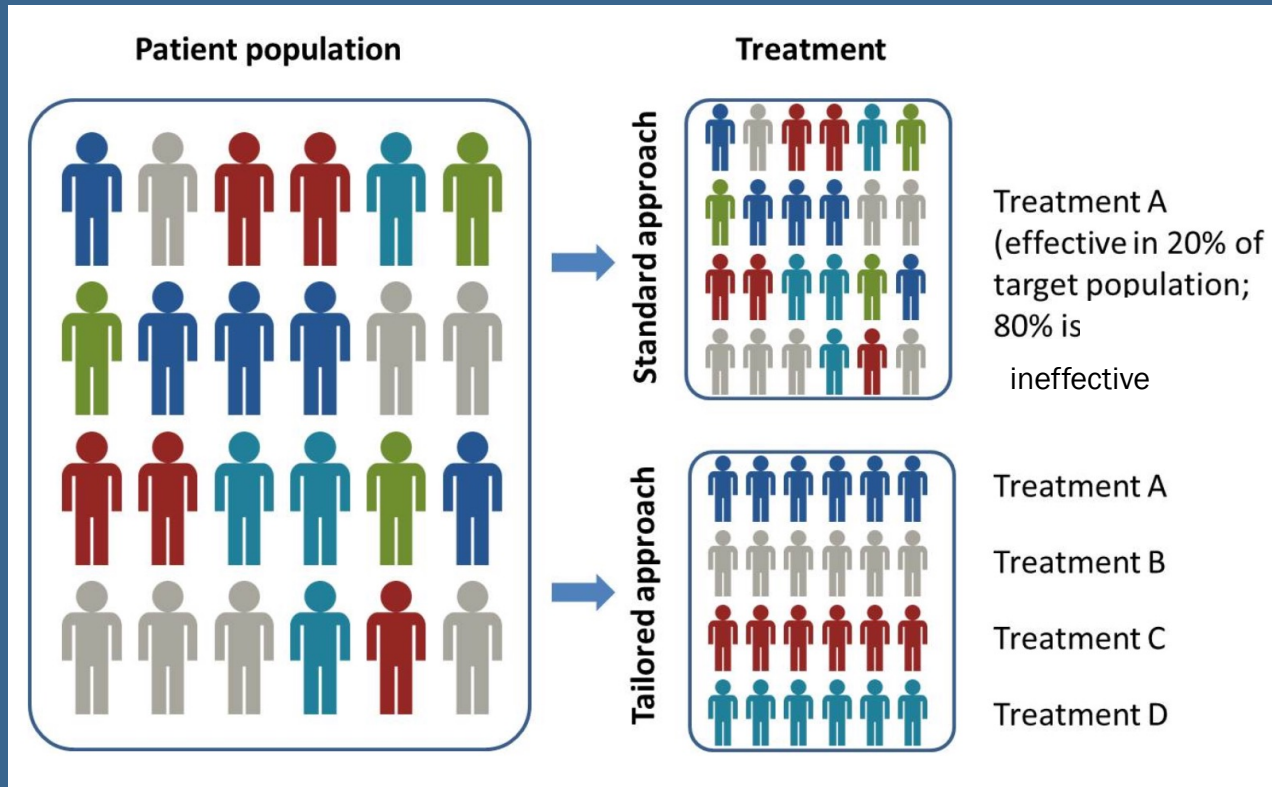
Newborn Screening Developmental Delay Prenatal Screening Breast Cancer Ovarian Cancer

Age: 0 3 y 25 y 49y 60 y



Geneticists see patients of all ages, with problems in any or multiple organ systems

Precision Medicine



- Potential to improve Diagnosis & Treatment for Rare and Common heritable diseases.

Examples of Precision Medicine

FDA approves new breakthrough therapy for cystic fibrosis

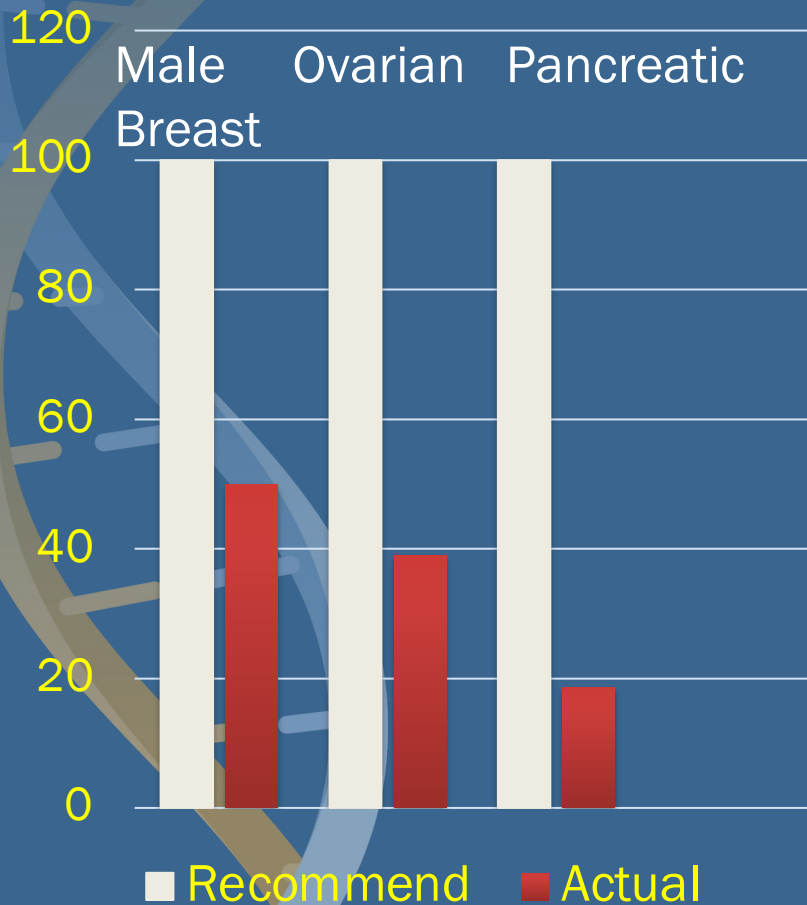
Treatment approved for approximately 90% of patients with cystic fibrosis, many of whom had no approved therapeutic options 2019

FDA approves olaparib for gBRCAm metastatic pancreatic adenocarcinoma 2019

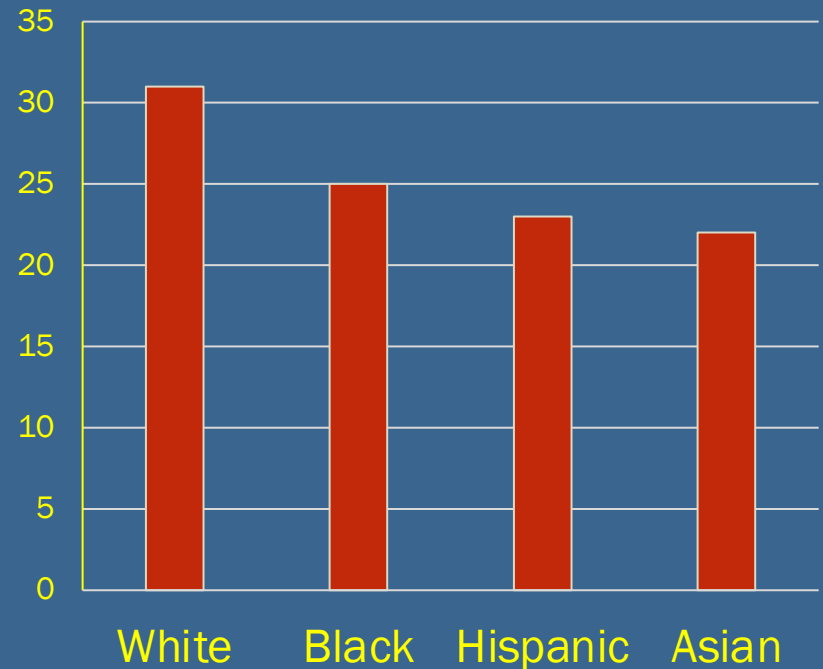
Source: [FDA.gov](https://www.fda.gov)



Genetic Testing in Cancer Patients is Underutilized



Genetic Testing in Male/Female Breast and ovarian Cancer by Race/Ethnicity



Washington's Genetics Clinics

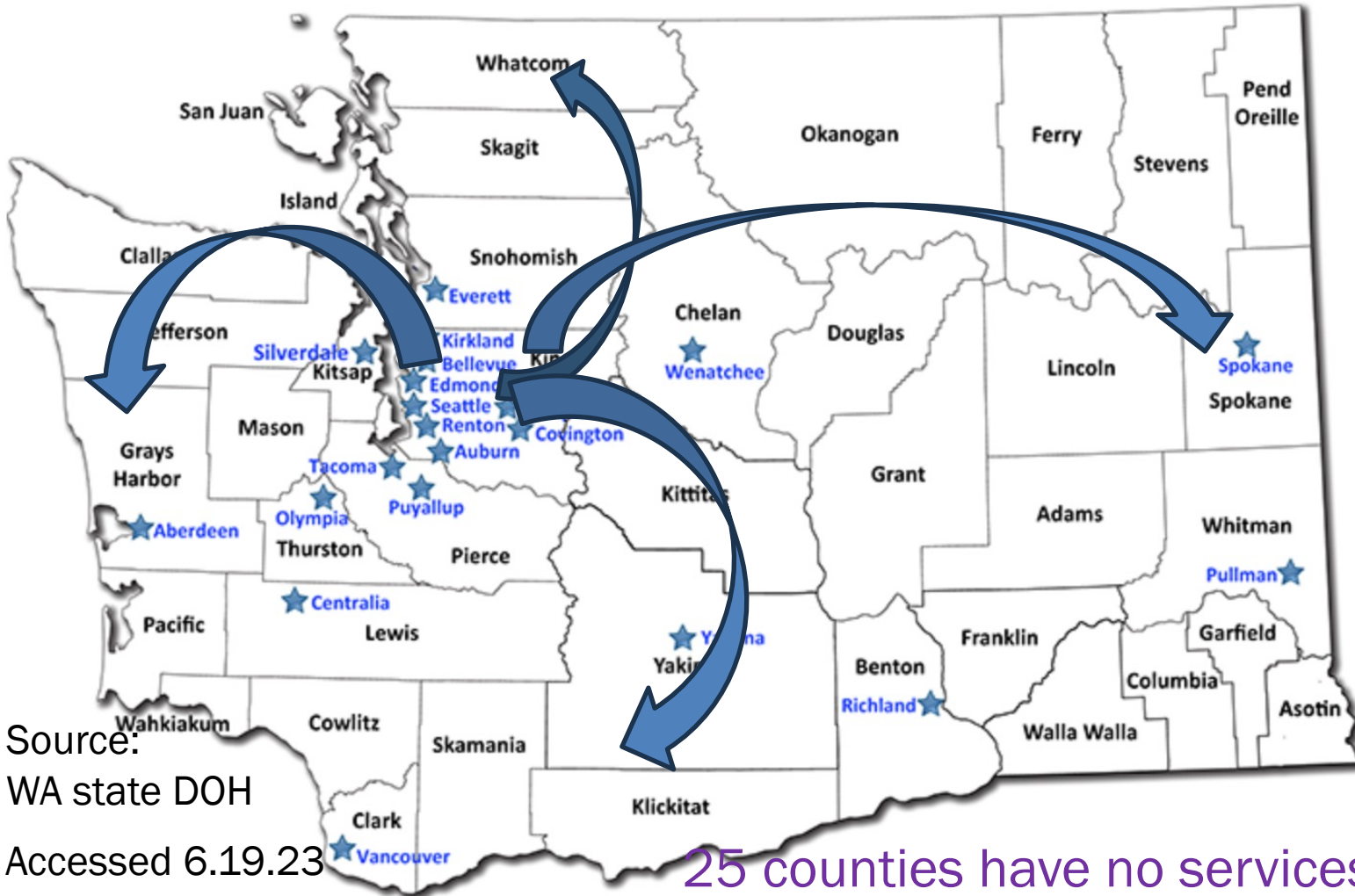


Source:
WA state DOH
Accessed 6.19.23

25 counties have no services

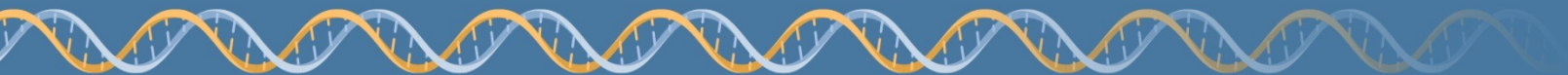
7 counties have limited services

Telehealth Can Improve Access to Genetics



During Covid19, We Implemented Telehealth clinic visits.

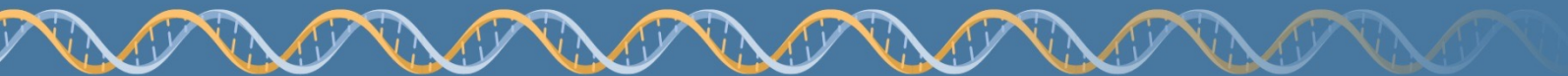
- Pre-pandemic: All visits were in person.
- **During PHE:** Telehealth increases access.
- Reduces COST in travel time/expense/time off from work.
- Visits are more efficient (no rooming, vital signs)
- We changed from blood to saliva as source of DNA with at home collection/mailing.
- **POST VISIT:** Results via MyChart and followup by telemedicine.



Medical Genetics Clinical Care is Ideal for Telehealth Visits

- We are a cognitive specialty (few procedures, no special equipment).
- We can do an observational exam by video.
- We can collect saliva/cheek swabs by mail for DNA.
- We are not available in rural areas.


- Currently, 90% of our visits are telehealth.
- Throughout COVID, we offered in-person visits when medically necessary.




How can your commission help?

- Preserve telehealth access to genetics services by board-certified MDs and GCs in WA state by advocating for reimbursement at parity with in-person-visits.





Thank you!
Questions?



Knowing about your genome helps you understand your health and supports your health decisions.

