

## **What Do Genetic Counselors Do?**

- Same day / next day appointment for newly diagnosed patients
- Collection and documentation of detailed family history of cancer
- Review of appropriate medical records
- Pedigree assessment and recognition of cancer susceptibility syndromes
- Calculation of hereditary cancer risk
- Explanation of inheritance pattern and implications for family members
- Assistance in exploring the medical and psychological implications of genetic testing
- Review of costs, benefits and limitations of genetic testing
- Provision of informed consent, including issues of privacy, confidentiality and legal protections against genetic discrimination
- Help in obtaining insurance coverage for the testing
- Selection of appropriate genetic test and testing laboratory
- Determination of best strategy for testing within the family
- Interpretation of genetic test results, which can be complex
- Provision of ongoing emotional support and assistance in informing family members
- Assistance in developing a plan for cancer screening and risk reduction, when appropriate
- Detailed summary letters sent to patients and their physicians
- Referrals to research and national support organizations, when appropriate