Oncology nurses are advocates for the ethical and legal use of patients' genetic information. However, this information may be used to discriminate against individuals when they share it while participating in workplace wellness programs. Amendments to federal genetic discrimination laws may lead employers to being financially penalized for nondisclosure of their genetic information. This article stresses the importance of nurses being aware of these laws and pushing for policy revision to protect sensitive genetic information.

**AT A GLANCE**
- Oncology nurses, along with their patients and families, need to be informed about the provisions and limitations of federal genetic discrimination laws.
- Oncology nurses must educate patients about how participation in their employers' workplace wellness programs gives employers and third parties access to their genetic information.
- Healthcare providers, particularly oncology nurses, should push for policy changes related to federal genetic discrimination laws (e.g., programs should be required to report their effectiveness to federal regulators, genetic information should be disclosed only to healthcare providers).

**Wellness Programs**

The establishment of voluntary wellness programs, which are also known as employer-sponsored, employee, or workplace wellness programs, was recommended in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (PPACA), with provisions implemented in January 2014. Employers, particularly large employers with more than 200 employees, were encouraged to establish wellness programs to promote their employees' health and prevent disease, with the ultimate goal of motivating employees to adopt healthier lifestyles (Roberts, 2017; Rosenbaum, 2011). After an employee voluntarily enrolls in a wellness program, he or she completes health risk assessment questionnaires and undergoes biometric screening (e.g., weight, blood pressure, cholesterol levels) (Roberts, 2017). The PPACA outlines recommendations to establish two types of voluntary wellness programs: participation-based and health-contingent wellness programs. Neither type of program is required to be evidence-based, and both are unregulated—organizations do not have to report the efficacy of their wellness programs (i.e., improvement in participants' health) to any federal regulator (Hudson & Pollitz, 2017).

Participation-based wellness programs must be offered to all employees. Incentives for employee participation in this type of program may include free or reduced gym memberships, free diagnostic testing, and/or tobacco cessation.