

Employees can protect themselves against workplace genetic discrimination

As genetic testing and genetic information become increasingly available, it is critical that employers have a full understanding of current genetic privacy and nondiscrimination protections, to ensure their workplaces are in full compliance with federal and state laws. For example, the U.S. Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) took effect on November 21, 2009, yet many employers still are unfamiliar with its provisions. Many are even less familiar with applicable state genetic privacy laws, despite enhanced enforcement of both federal and state laws.

One section of GINA, called Title II, applies equally to employers, employment agencies, labor organizations, and joint labor-management committees that control job training. This section of the law makes it an unlawful employment practice for an employer to “fail or refuse to hire ... discharge ... or otherwise to discriminate against any employee with respect to the compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment” because of an employee’s genetic information. Generally, a person’s genetic information is defined as information obtained from the individual’s genetic tests, those of the individual’s family members, or from the individual’s family health history.

Read the full, original story: [Protecting Genetic Data](#)