
The Ontario Association of Radiologist Echoes Support of Breast Cancer Screening for Women in Their 40s

The OAR endorses the Canadian Association of Radiologists' (CAR); the American College of Radiology (ACR) and Respected International Radiologists' position on breast screening for women in their 40s.

OAKVILLE, ONTARIO (November 24, 2011) – The Ontario Association of Radiologists (OAR) concurs with the position put forward by CAR, ACR and other respected international radiologists to screen Canadian women aged 40 to 49 for breast cancer, the organization said in response to the recently released new screening guidelines from the Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care.

“Quality patient care is our top priority and early diagnosis is the foundation for that care,” said OAR President Dr. Giuseppe Tarulli. “Breast screening for women in their 40s **must** be supported, and all breast screening, regardless of age should be the best available technology.”

The OAR continues to advocate on behalf of patients for new breast cancer detecting technology and has submitted a report to the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, proposing a plan to modernize Ontario’s Mammography Equipment to support the delivery of modern digital mammography. Regrettably the Ontario government has failed to take any of the recommended actions.

“Ontario lags behind the rest of Canada and its adoption of digital mammography services. While virtually every province in the country has decided to implement full field digital

mammography equipment as the standard of care through health strategy announcements and capital investments, Ontario has no such plan or stated policy,” Dr. Tarulli said.

“Unlike other provinces where the majority of their mammography equipment is digital, Ontario is languishing with approximately two-thirds of the more than 300 units that cannot provide a digital mammographic image.”

“Doing nothing is not an option”, Dr. Tarulli said. “An unwillingness to invest in digital mammography solutions is knowingly gambling with women’s lives. Mammography has proved to be one of the leading reasons why the incidence of breast cancer has not increased and that the mortality rate from breast cancer has continued to decrease. Investing in newer and improved breast cancer technologies is an imperative issue that Ontario cannot afford to delay.”

“Digital mammography has been shown to increase the accuracy of breast cancer detection, particularly in younger women,” Dr. Tarulli added. “Premenopausal cancers tend to be faster growing than postmenopausal cancers so women in their 40s should be screened annually,” he said. “The OAR recommends annual mammography screening beginning by age 40.”

The OAR also supports the CAR’s recommended screening at one to two year intervals for women 50 to 74 rather than the two to three year interval recommended by the task force. Research has demonstrated that when the screening interval is longer than 24 months, there is an increase in interval cancers.