

Diagnostic and Supplemental Breast Imaging

Fact Sheet – January 2025

Early detection of breast cancer reduces the chance of dying from the disease. While millions have coverage for screening mammography without cost sharing, individuals at a higher risk of breast cancer or those requiring follow-up imaging due to an abnormal screening mammogram result are subject to hundreds to thousands of dollars in cost sharing.

DIAGNOSTIC AND SUPPLEMENTAL BREAST IMAGING

- Early detection of breast cancer is not possible without the medically necessary diagnostic follow-up or supplemental imaging required to rule out breast cancer or confirm the need for a biopsy.
- A recent study published in Radiology found that 1 in 5 patients said they would not go in for recommended follow-up imaging if they had to pay a deductible.
- The same study noted that 18% of patients shared they would skip the initial screening mammogram if they knew they would have to pay a deductible for the follow-up testing.
- Out-of-pocket costs are particularly burdensome for high-risk individuals, including those previously diagnosed with breast cancer, as diagnostic and supplemental tests are recommended rather than traditional screening.
- Eliminating out-of-pocket costs for diagnostic and supplemental imaging would improve access and likely result in more patients receiving an earlier diagnosis.

FAIR AND EQUAL COVERAGE

- In 2025 alone, more than 640 individuals will be diagnosed with breast cancer and more than 70 will die of the disease in North Dakota.
- Despite significant advancements in breast cancer screening and diagnosis over the past 30 years, disparities persist across some demographics. Evidence shows that American Indian women and Alaska Native women had lower rates of breast cancer screening compared to other women.
- Studies show that individuals facing high out-of-pocket costs associated with diagnostic and supplemental imaging are less likely to have the recommended follow-up imaging. This can mean that the person will delay care until the cancer has spread to other parts of the body making it more deadly and much costlier to treat.
- According to the National Cancer Institute's Financial Burden of Cancer report, breast cancer has the highest treatment cost of any cancer.
- It is imperative that we take measures to reduce the overall costs to the health care system, ensuring breast cancer is detected at the earliest possible stage helps to eliminate the exorbitant treatments costs associated with a later stage diagnosis.

Susan G. Komen encourages legislators to support HB 1283 which will increase access to medically necessary diagnostic and supplemental breast imaging by eliminating burdensome patient cost sharing.

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