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INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN 2013-04

To: Healthcare Facilities Providing Mammography Services
From: David M. Howe, Program Director 
Subject: Dense Breast Tissue Advisement

The State of Oregon Radiation Protection Services (RPS), in partnership with the Oregon Breast and Cervical Cancer Program, is issuing this informational bulletin.

During the 2013 legislative session, Senate Bill 420 was passed which directs health care facilities offering mammography services to provide an advisement in the form prescribed by the Oregon Health Authority to patients with dense breast tissue. Specific advisement language is required, including the possibility of the need for supplemental imaging based on the patient's risk factors. This information is to be provided within the lay person summary mammography report issued to the patient.

New Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 333-106-0735, titled Breast Density Notification, was adopted to enforce incorporation of the following language within the lay summary report when dense breast tissue has been determined by a radiologist.

Your mammogram shows that your breast tissue is dense. For most women, breast density decreases with age, but in some women, there is little change. Dense breast tissue is common and is not abnormal. However, dense breast tissue can make it harder to find cancer on a mammogram and may also be associated with an increased risk of breast cancer. This information is provided to you by Oregon State Law to raise your awareness and to promote discussion with your health care provider about your own risk for breast cancer. Together, you can decide if additional breast imaging tests such as a breast ultrasound, Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) or Breast-Specific-Gamma-Imaging (BSGI) would be beneficial based on your risk factors and physical examinations. A report of your results was sent to your health care provider.

This rule becomes effective January 1, 2014. However, to allow facilities time to comply with the new rule above, RPS is allowing a grace period for mammography facilities to incorporate the new language within their lay person reports. Commencing March 1, 2014, RPS staff will enforce compliance relating to OAR 333-106-0735.

See next page for related definitions and the specific OAR language.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact:
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333-106-0735

Breast Density Notification

(1) As used in this rule:

(a) "Breast Density" refers to the relative amount of different tissues present in the breast. A dense breast has less fat than glandular and connective tissue. Mammogram films of breasts with higher density are harder to read and interpret than those of less dense breasts. (Source: National Cancer Institute).

(b) "Facility" has the meaning given that term in 42 U.S.C. 263b and includes but is not limited to a hospital, outpatient department, clinic, radiology practice, or mobile unit, an office of a physician, or other facility that conducts breast cancer screening or diagnosis through mammography activities. "Facility" does not include a facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(c) "Mammography activities" means the operation of equipment to produce a mammogram, the processing of the film, the initial interpretation of the mammogram and the viewing conditions for that interpretation.

(2) In all cases where a mammogram shows a patient has extreme breast density, the facility shall incorporate the following notification within the lay summary mammography report provided to the patient. When a mammogram shows a patient has heterogeneous breast density, the decision of whether or not to incorporate the patient notification is left to the interpreting radiologist's discretion:

DENSE BREAST TISSUE NOTIFICATION

Your mammogram shows that your breast tissue is dense. For most women, breast density decreases with age, but in some women, there is little change. Dense breast tissue is common and is not abnormal. However, dense breast tissue can make it harder to find cancer on a mammogram and may also be associated with an increased risk of breast cancer. This information is provided to you by Oregon State Law to raise your awareness and to promote discussion with your health care provider about your own risk for breast cancer. Together, you can decide if additional breast imaging tests such as a breast ultrasound, Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) or Breast-Specific-Gamma-Imaging (BSGI) would be beneficial based on your risk factors and physical examinations. A report of your results was sent to your health care provider.

(3) The Dense Breast Tissue Notification statement and guidelines shall be included in the facility's policy on how they communicate mammography results to the patient and their health care providers.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 413.042, Oregon Laws 2013, chapter 411

Stats. Implemented: Oregon Laws 2013, chapter 411