



PIPER BREAST CENTER™ *Communiqué*

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MAMMOGRAPHY QUALITY STANDARDS ACT

~ by Deborah L. Day, MD, and Stephanie Remark, RT (R)(M)

Mammography is the only medical procedure targeted by the United States Congress for quality mandates. In 1992, Congress enacted the Mammography Quality Standards Act (MQSA) to ensure that all women have access to quality mammography. The goal was to guarantee the safety and reliability of mammography and to help detect breast cancer at its earliest, most treatable stages.

Under MQSA, mandatory standards have been established for initial and continued training of radiologists, technologists and physicists who are involved with mammography. Required quality assurance tests are performed regularly to monitor the mammography equipment, and stringent records are kept by every facility. In addition, the Minnesota Department of Health, as an agent of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), inspects the mammography facilities in Minnesota annually. Each facility must display the FDA certificate in a location visible for patients in order to legally perform mammograms.

Another requirement of the MQSA is that mammography facilities need to be accredited by an approved body such as the American College of Radiology (ACR). Through the ACR, facilities must submit an application for renewal as well as specified documentation and two sets of mammograms from each mammography unit for review.

The ACR also has voluntary accreditation programs. In addition to mammography, Piper Breast Center is accredited with the ACR in breast ultrasound, breast ultrasound biopsy and stereotactic breast biopsy. These voluntary programs require facilities to submit images for review, quality control documentation and personnel requirements. In order to maintain these additional program accreditations, Piper Breast Center must submit applications for renewal every three years.

MQSA has improved the overall quality of mammography in Minnesota and throughout the country. Piper Breast Center has remained committed to following the strict standards of MQSA as well as key accreditation programs to ensure its patients truly receive the gold standard in breast care.

For more information about the MQSA program and certified facilities, visit their website at www.fda.gov/CDRH/MAMMOGRAPHY.

Did You Know ...

~ by Carol Bergen, RN,
clinical manager, Piper Breast Center

While it is true that your risk is increased if a close, first degree relative has had breast cancer, approximately 80 percent of women diagnosed do not have a mother, sister or daughter who has had a diagnosis of breast cancer.

Often you or even your doctor may not be able to feel a lump until it is about the size of a pea. A mammogram, however, can detect cancers when they are much smaller, often years before a lump or change can be felt. Finding breast cancer early will almost always give a woman more options for treatment.



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NOT ALWAYS CANCER: A PATIENT'S STORY

Two days before she was scheduled to leave for vacation, 38-year-old Chris Schaeherer felt pain on the right side of her right breast. At first, Schaeherer thought the pain was caused by her bra but three days into her vacation, she noticed a lump that extended from her underarm to the middle of her breast. Although the lump was growing and becoming more painful, she decided to ignore it until after her vacation.

Once home, Schaeherer visited her regular physician who suspected it could be inflammatory breast cancer. Schaeherer's stepmother was treated for breast cancer 10 years earlier at Piper Breast Center and immediately made an appointment for her stepdaughter knowing firsthand the physicians' expertise.

At Piper Breast Center, Schaeherer saw Margit Bretzke, MD, and Margaret MacRae, MD. After physical examinations and viewing the imaging studies from the outside mammograms, both doctors felt cancer was a strong possibility and ordered a complete workup for Schaeherer to be certain.

"When I first met Chris, there was a serious concern she had a rapidly growing malignancy in her breast," said MacRae. "If it was malignant, we were worried that it appeared to be extremely aggressive and felt her best course of action would be to treat it with chemotherapy before surgery."

After the tests, Schaeherer and her family went home to wait for all the results. The next day, MacRae called Schaeherer and left a message to call her back right away. It was good news – the mass was not cancer. The mammogram, breast ultrasound, breast ultrasound-guided biopsy and breast magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) all showed no evidence of cancer.

"Even though it was a scary situation, my experience at Piper Breast Center was beautiful," said Schaeherer. "Everyone involved that day, from doctors to nurses, gave me excellent care and guided me through the entire process. This experience reinforced to me the importance of breast health and breast examinations."

SCHEDULING YOUR APPOINTMENT

~ by Piper Breast Center schedulers

To make an appointment at the Piper Breast Center, call 612-863-3150 or toll-free at 1-866-655-6333. It is important to let the scheduler know at that time if you have any problems or concerns regarding your breasts. It is also recommended to have the following information at your fingertips to help ensure you are scheduled for the appropriate appointment(s).

- name
- date of birth
- doctor's name or the name of the doctor where a report should be sent
- name of clinic(s) where your mammograms were done in the last five years (so films can be obtained)
- dates and times when you are available for the appointment. (For most insurance companies, you must wait at least one whole year from your last screening before having another.)

To be certain the breast center is prepared for your arrival, the scheduler also may ask these questions:

- Have you ever had any surgeries on your breasts, including implants?
- Will you need assistance with mobility or language interpretation during your appointment?

If you request a **diagnostic** mammogram, ultrasound or breast biopsy, the scheduler will need *additional* information:

- name of the procedure the doctor ordered (a physician written order is necessary)
- reason for the procedure.

If you request a **consultation** with a surgeon, the scheduler also needs to know:

- current mailing address
- home, work and/or cell phone numbers
- insurance type
- reason for the appointment
- name of the facility (or facilities) where you have had other procedures done, and the names and dates of those procedures.

A MODEL OF EXCELLENCE

~ by Marge Watry,
director of Oncology Services

Virginia Piper Cancer Institute (VPCI) is the cancer division of Abbott Northwestern Hospital. As the oncology center of excellence, VPCI treats patients with all types of cancers through multidisciplinary teams centered around disease specific programs.

Piper Breast Center (PBC) is one of these multidisciplinary programs and is the first major disease-specific program at VPCI. The Piper Breast Center has established a reputation for setting the standard of care through all phases of cancer: screening and prevention, early detection and treatment. The cornerstones of this care include multidisciplinary treatment planning conferences, nurse coordinators and clinical research. The Piper Breast Center has been so successful that other VPCI disease specific programs have modeled many of their strategies after it. These other VPCI disease specific programs include:

- gastrointestinal cancer program
 - esophageal and gastric cancer
 - liver and pancreatic cancer
 - colorectal cancer
- gynecological oncology program
- head and neck cancer program
- Piper Lung Cancer Program
- neuro-oncology program
- autologous stem cell transplant program.

Other services offered by VPCI include:

- radiation oncology
- clinical research
- inpatient care
- genetic counseling
- cancer laboratory
- support and education.

For more information about Virginia Piper Cancer Institute, call 612-863-4633.

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Medical editor ~ Beverly Trombley, MD

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