

Screening Mammography Program of BC



BC Cancer Agency

CARE + RESEARCH

An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority

Background

Screening Mammography Program of BC

- The Screening Mammography Program of BC is offered by the BC Cancer Agency through the Provincial Health Services Authority.
- Established in 1988, it was the first organized population-based screening program in Canada for the early detection of breast cancer.
- The goal of the provincial program is to reduce breast cancer deaths by finding cancer in its early stages, when it's small and there are more treatment options and better outcomes.
- The program operates 37 fixed screening mammography centres across the province, and three mobile screening units that serve rural and remote communities in BC.
- BC women between the ages of 40 and 74 with a primary care provider (doctor, nurse practitioner or naturopath), can book a screening mammogram directly through the program of BC without a doctor's referral by calling the BC Cancer Agency Screening Call Centre at 1.800.663.9203 or 604.877.6187.

Mobile mammography service

- The Screening Mammography Program of BC's mobile service helps to improve and increase access to screening for women of BC.
- The mobile service was first piloted in BC in February 1990, and now visits over 120 rural communities across BC, including over 40 First Nations communities annually.
- Each year, the mobile service performs almost 10 per cent of the total number of screening mammograms in BC.
- Eligible women can use the clinic locator on the program website to either find a fixed location near them, or view the schedule for the mobile mammography service in their neighbourhood.
- For remote communities that the mobile unit is unable to access, assisted travel support is provided for eligible women in the community to either the nearest fixed centre or mobile stop.
- Once in a community a female technologist welcomes the woman aboard the Digital Mobile Mammography Coach and conducts the mammogram.
- The image quality on the mobile is of the same high standard as a woman would receive in a regular screening centre.

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Statistics

- In 2014, 259,341 screening mammograms were performed.
- There were 1,402 breast cancers reported in 2014 as of July 15, 2015 (5.4 per 1,000 exams).
- Since the inception of the program in 1988 to the end of 2014, we have completed over 5.0 million screening mammograms and detected 22,372 breast cancers.
- 63 per cent of invasive tumours found in women ages 50 to 69 by the program are less than 15 mm, exceeding the international target of 50 per cent.
- In FY (fiscal year) 2014, ~10 per cent of all screening mammograms were performed by the mobile service: 2,972 in the Fraser Health Authority; 10,605 women in the Interior Health Authority; 2,004 women in the Northern Health Authority; 1,995 women in the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority; and 4,029 women in the Vancouver Island Health Authority.
- Overall participation in the program by First Nations women over the last four years has increased by nine per cent overall, while participation by East/South East Asian women has increased by three per cent and that of South Asian women has increased by five per cent.

Breast cancer

- BC has one of the lowest incidences of breast cancer in the country, and some of the best survival outcomes for those women who do get breast cancer.
- The risk of developing breast cancer increases with age – over 80 per cent of new breast cancers diagnosed each year are in women age 50 or older.
- Most women who develop breast cancer do not have a family history of the disease – 75 per cent of women diagnosed with breast cancer have no identifiable risk factors.
- Mammograms help find cancer in its earliest stages – when there are more treatment options and a better chance for successful recovery.
- Breast cancers found with high-quality, two-view screening mammography are relatively small, with median size 1.0 to 1.5 cm while those found by clinical breast examination or by a woman herself have a median size of 2 to 2.5 cm.

For more information on the program, eligibility or clinic locations, visit www.screeningbc.ca.