

Canadian Society of Breast Imaging's Position Statement on the CAR Mammography Accreditation Program

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According to the Canadian Cancer Society, breast cancer is the most common cancer among Canadian women and the second leading cause of death from cancer in Canadian women. Mammograms are a key diagnostic tool for women's health, helping to identify cancers and improve treatment outcomes.

The Canadian Association of Radiologists (CAR) Mammography Accreditation Program (MAP) has been in existence for nearly three decades. It reflects the radiology profession's commitment to quality by putting patients first, promoting education, ensuring systems and workstations are operating optimally, and promoting standardized reporting across the country.

The Canadian Society of Breast Imaging (CSBI) supports mammography accreditation because it is an important process in helping to ensure that radiologists in Canada meet an essential standard of care and that patients have access to consistent quality imaging.

Adherence to professional standards, clinical practice guidelines and participation in rigorous accreditation programs like MAP enhance healthcare practitioners' skill sets and strengthen the healthcare system while ensuring the quality of care and patient safety. It is critical that women have trust in mammography and cancer screening programs.

Over the past ten years, a growing body of evidence has shown that radiologists who read higher volumes of mammograms are better able to differentiate between benign and malignant lesions and that an increasing number of reads is correlated with a decrease in the false positive rate for mammography.¹ As a result, the governing bodies in other international jurisdictions charged with ensuring the quality of mammography programs have updated their standards to require that radiologists involved in screening programs complete a greater number of reads per year.

The CAR recently updated its MAP reads standards to align with the evidence and international best practices while ensuring we maintain broad mammography access for Canadian women. The CAR accreditation program requires 1000 mammogram reads per year.

This standard is important to keep skills current and ensure that radiologists have the necessary expertise to identify abnormalities in mammography scans. Increased reader volumes will help minimize biopsies, patient stress and other interventions.

¹ Optimal number of mammography readings to work in screening programmes. European Commission Initiative on Breast and Colorectal Cancer. Accessed November 7, 2022. <https://healthcare-quality.jrc.ec.europa.eu>

The CSBI affirms that the Canadian radiology community must stay aligned with international standards and evidence-based research. Having set standards established by radiologists (MAP) will promote professional sovereignty and ensure consistency across the country and in all mammography centres.

“The CSBI is guided by its mission to promote high quality breast imaging in Canada. The evidence is clear that a minimum volume of mammograms read per year is required to maintain good performance for screening mammography and improved diagnostic accuracy. The CSBI supports the changes to MAP, requiring a minimum number of mammograms of 1000 per year per Canadian radiologist.” Dr. Jean Seely, President, Canadian Society of Breast Imaging

Patients who receive a mammogram should do so knowing that they will receive the highest level of care and the most professional review and assessment of their scans.

The CSBI stands united with the CAR MAP in promoting access to high-quality mammography across Canada. All questions and queries about the CAR MAP should be directed to the CAR at map@car.ca.