



## The Canadian Association of Radiologists' Response to the Canadian Task Force on Preventive Healthcare's Draft Guidelines on Breast Imaging

The Canadian Association of Radiologists (CAR) believes that all women should have access to quality mammography imaging in Canada. The CAR guidelines on breast imaging advocate for breast cancer screening beginning at the age of 40. Early detection through regular screening can significantly improve outcomes for women and save lives.

The CAR acknowledges the efforts of the Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care in updating the breast cancer screening guidelines and we commend the Honourable Mark Holland, Minister of Health, for addressing the concerns surrounding these guidelines. The Minister's call for an extended consultation period and the inclusion of leading experts to review the draft guidelines reflects the importance of a thorough and inclusive evaluation in health policy.

The CAR emphasizes the following key points:

1. **Early Screening Advocacy:** It is paramount that the Federal government clearly promotes the value of breast cancer screening and the value of its early detection. Women's lives depend on it. CAR strongly supports the initiation of breast cancer screening at age 40. Evidence shows that early detection through regular screening significantly improves outcomes. It is imperative to offer this service universally to enhance preventive care.
2. **Capacity Building:** We urge all jurisdictions to build the necessary infrastructure (equipment, technology, and radiology human resources) to provide mammography services to women starting at age 40. This will ensure that the healthcare system can support the increased demand and offer timely and equitable access to screening.
3. **Research and Awareness:** Addressing research gaps, enhancing community awareness, and providing disaggregated data analysis are essential for informed decision-making and targeted interventions, particularly for high-risk populations. We support federal efforts by the Ministry of Health to increase research and awareness on breast cancer screening, empowering women, particularly those at higher risk, to make decisions about their healthcare.
4. **Expert Review and Best Practices:** Collaborative efforts are crucial to ensure that the guidelines are both evidence-based and practically applicable across different regions. Whether it be through the Public Health Agency of Canada or the Canadian Institute for Health Research,

convening senior provincial and territorial officials, along with key experts, to review the guidelines and share best practices is essential for a comprehensive and effective approach. Transparency and accountability are essential for quality care as well as our patient's confidence in the system.

By working together to establish processes and resources for patients to access early screening, we can offer better preventive care and improve the overall health and well-being of Canadians.



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