Talking Points for O’Donoghue Article
Cost of Mammography Screening In the US

1. The article is a cost analysis to justify less care to US women.
2. Authors claim no outcome differences using USPSTF and ACS guidelines. However AJR article (Hendrick and Helvie) showed 6500-10,000 additional women would die from breast cancer if USPSTF guidelines were followed.
3. The authors’ conclusion that there are no real outcome differences between USPSTF and ACS guidelines is wrong. Their own references show a 70% reduction in life years lost and lives saved (Mandelblatt) and 42% more life years saved with annual digital screening mammography vs. biennial screening (van Ravestyn).
4. Using USPSTF data the cost per life year saved is well under the $75,000 to $100,000 per quality adjusted life year that is considered a cost-effective intervention. (Shousboe)
5. More than 40% of life years lost to breast cancer are in women diagnosed in their 40’s.
6. Basing screening recommendations on risk profiles is a limited strategy since 75% of breast cancer occurs in women of average risk.
7. The financial assessment is flawed- it does not report on the cost of NOT SCREENING
8. Non-reported costs of not screening include death, morbidity, metastatic disease, lost income and needed support associated with USPSTF guidelines.
9. The cost of treating a single case of metastatic breast cancer is $250,000 (Montero).
10. The cost in lost productivity of one person dying from breast cancer is $223,000 (Bradley)
11. The cost of not screening the additional women who would die each year if USPSTF guidelines were followed could be as high as $4.7B each year.
12. A national discussion regarding how to efficiently use precious health care resources is welcome. However the conversation should not be skewed by incomplete and misleading information. Following these guidelines would result in the deaths of thousands of women each year from breast cancer.

References