



ACR and SBI: Mammography Protections Included in Omnibus Spending Bill Can Save Lives *Step Will Protect Efforts to Address Racial and Regional Disparities in Breast Cancer Outcomes*

An extension of current protections included in the Consolidated Appropriations Act (HR 1625) ensures that women who want to get regular mammograms retain insurance coverage with no copay. This may help avert a screening decline and thousands of deaths resulting from implementing 2009 and 2016 United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) breast cancer screening recommendations.

The protections, previously passed in the Consolidated Appropriations Act in 2015 and extended in 2017, recognize, for purposes of insurance coverage requirements, 2002 USPSTF guidelines that call for screening every one-to-two years starting at age 40 – rather than biennial screening for those ages 50-74 allowed by 2009/2016 USPSTF recommendations.

Using 2009/2016 USPSTF guidelines would result in up to 13,770 more breast cancer deaths each year in the U.S. Many more women would endure more extensive treatment than if their cancers were found early by a mammogram.

According to 2015 National Cancer Institute (SEER) data, since mammography became widespread in the 1980s, the U.S. breast cancer death rate in women, unchanged for the previous 50 years, has dropped 43 percent. Breast cancer deaths in men, who receive the same treatment as women but are not screened, have not declined.

This extension helps ensure insurers continue to cover annual mammograms for women starting at age 40. A lack of insurance coverage for screening mammograms would particularly impact underserved areas where screening is already less frequent.

- [African-American women](#) are 42 percent more likely to die from breast cancer than white women. In fact, since 1990, breast cancer death rates dropped only 23 percent in African-American women (roughly half the decline in white women).
- [Women who live in rural areas](#) are less likely to be screened and more likely to die of breast cancer than those in metropolitan areas. The breast cancer death rate is also declining more slowly in rural areas.

The American College of Radiology and Society of Breast Imaging applaud the extension of these mammography coverage protections.

For more information regarding the proven effectiveness of regular mammography screening at reducing breast cancer deaths, please visit RadiologyInfo.org, MammographySavesLives.org and EndTheConfusion.org.