



Vermont Radiological Society Position Statement 2/5/15

Bill S.157 has been introduced which proposes to require health care facilities that perform mammograms to inform patients of their breast density. The proposed language of the Bill may be found at:

<http://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Documents/2016/Docs/BILLS/S-0157/S-0157%20As%20Introduced.pdf>

The Vermont Radiological Society (VRS), the Vermont chapter of the American College of Radiology, which represents nearly all of the practicing radiologists in the State, supports the concept of raising awareness of breast density and its influence on screening for breast cancer but cannot support the wording of the currently proposed Bill. VRS leadership has modified the notification statement in a manner that reflects the following goals:

- this notification should be informative and spur discussion but should not be alarmist
- this notification should be simple and uncluttered enough to actually be read
- there are complexities that have developed since breast density awareness campaigns were initiated several years ago, including the widespread integration of tomosynthesis in clinical practice and the development of controversy over appropriate mammography screening guidelines, not to mention the longstanding issues related to regional availability and reimbursement, that make reference to specific modalities less appropriate in such a notice
- the same complexities that make mention of specific modalities inappropriate, make an informed conversation between health care provider and patient even more important.

With this in mind, the VRS proposes the following wording for this notification statement, which would be intended to be incorporated into the federally –mandated lay letter that our patients already receive:

"Your mammogram indicates that you have dense breast tissue. Dense breast tissue is a normal finding that is present in about 40 percent of women. Dense breast tissue can make it more difficult to detect cancer on a mammogram and may be associated with a slightly increased risk for breast cancer. This information is provided to raise your awareness of the impact of breast density on cancer detection and to encourage you to discuss this issue, as well as other breast cancer risk factors, with your health care provider as you decide together which screening options may be right for you."