

Declining Mammography Rates Portend Potential Preventive Care Crisis

A recent report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicates that mammography screening rates fell between 2005 and 2006. The report, published in the *American Journal of Roentgenology*, analyzed mammography screening utilization rates by state in correlation with each state's breast cancer incidence rates. Between 2000 and 2006, 49 states saw a reduction in breast cancer incidence, while 17 has a slight increase in mammography screening rates. However, 34 states as well as the District of Columbia saw a decline in screening rates during that time period, leading to an overall screening utilization decline for women 40 years of age and older. A commentary on the CDC report by University of Michigan professor of radiology Dr. Ruth C. Carlos voices concern that this reduction in screening rates could lead to a future increase in breast cancer incidence rates. According to Carlos, both health insurance coverage rates for mammography and the number of breast imaging centers in the United States are falling, which may be leading to the drop in screening rates.

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