



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Dense breast bill takes effect June 1, 2015**

### **Regional Medical Imaging's 20-year fight to inform women of breast cancer risk is fully realized**

**Flint, Michigan – May 22, 2015** – Regional Medical Imaging (RMI), one of the state's leading advocates for notifying women about their breast density, reminds mid-Michigan physicians that Public Act 517 of 2014 (commonly called the "breast density notification law") takes effect June 1, 2015.

The law requires doctors to notify women if their mammogram demonstrates dense breast tissue, which makes it harder to find cancer. Dense breast tissue also increases overall risk for breast cancer. Michigan is now the 21st state to have laws about breast density notification.

Dr. David Strahle, founder of RMI, was the state's only radiologist present when Gov. Rick Snyder held a ceremonial signing for the law on May 20 in Lansing. (The bill was officially signed in December). Dr. Strahle decisively testified on May 8, 2014 before the Michigan Senate Health Policy Committee in support of the bill.

"As the only radiology practice testifying in support of this bill, the Governor made our long-standing practice into law," Strahle said. "This is something that should have happened a long time ago."

Under the direction of Dr. Strahle, RMI radiologists reported density issues in women's mammograms for many years prior to the passage of this bill. Mammograms are simply not enough for women with very dense breast tissue, Strahle said, as the cancer detection rate of mammograms can be well below 50%, based on recent research. Further, dense tissue reportedly increases the chance of developing breast cancer by four- to six times.

RMI leads the state in advocating for better testing to save lives of women with dense breasts through earlier cancer detection when treatment is more effective. RMI industry-leading initiatives include:

- Advanced mammograms providing breast density, Gail score, and consideration of family and genetic history.
- Screening breast MRIs using the Strahle Protocol (a.k.a. "Rapid MRIs" with a 7.5-minute total scan time) enabling detection of cancer up to six years earlier.
- Clinical trials using extreme cold to destroy early-stage cancer cells within the breast without the necessity of surgery.

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## **About Regional Medical Imaging**

Regional Medical Imaging is mid-Michigan's premier imaging center with locations in Flint, Fenton, Davison, Grand Blanc, and Saginaw. A privately owned firm founded in 1985, RMI is committed to personal attention and respect for patients in a convenient, clean, comfortable setting. The motto "Our family taking care of your family" is the core philosophy of RMI. The company, nationally recognized for excellence, strives to lead and innovate in the field of diagnostic and interventional radiology. To learn more about this unique company visit [www.rmipc.net](http://www.rmipc.net).

**EDITOR:** Please see attached handout *Rapid Screening Breast MRI: Normal Risk Women with Dense Breast Tissue* with additional points about Screening Breast Rapid MRI.

## **RAPID SCREENING BREAST MRI NORMAL RISK WOMEN WITH DENSE BREAST TISSUE**

David A. Strahle, M.D.

- The current use of Breast MRI is always after mammograms have initially discovered the disease. The sensitivity of mammograms in women with  $\geq 50\%$  fibroglandular tissue (FGT) is as low as 14%.
- Screening only with mammograms essentially seals the fate of many women by delaying time of discovery before MRI can exert its influence to change the course of the disease.
- Based on the Rapid MRI screening protocol using only 4 acquisitions, MRI was able to diagnose 16.3 cancers per 1000 women per year in women with an initial negative screening mammogram.
- The sensitivity of this MRI exam has proven to shift time of detection up to 6 years earlier than detection of disease by screening women with mammography.
- Performed in less than half the time and expense of a full exam, the Rapid Breast MRI protocol requires only 7.5 minutes of scan time and is easy to interpret by MRI mammography readers. This permits maximum throughput of 7 examinations of women every 2 hours, the maximum throughput possible using scan times of 7.5 minutes or less.
- The new protocol retains critical kinetic information which reduces the number of biopsies and helps avoid interpretive mistakes resulting in a PPV of 41%. The issue of mammographic calcifications is also addressed in our research paper.
- Clinical use of this new protocol the last two years has produced excellent results, exceeding our initial analysis, at a cancer detection rate of 20.3 per 1,000 women per year.
- Significant insurance industry savings in numerous categories, including reduction of biopsy rates, were demonstrated ranging up to 2,000% return on investment. More than one insurance carrier is already reimbursing for routine screening breast MRIs using this protocol.
- When compared to new established reimbursement rates for tomosynthesis (3D mammography) averaged with additional studies and biopsies, Rapid Breast MRI exams are less expensive.
- While preserving mammograms as the screening procedure of choice for women with less than 50% FGT, MRI should be used in place of or in addition to mammography for screening women with dense breasts until involution of her tissue occurs below 50%.
- With 35% unused capacity in the United States, at least 2/3 of women with dense breasts could be routinely scanned by MRI without having to purchase any new screening technology.

Factor	Tomosynthesis	MRI
Cost of New Equipment	\$450,000	None
Radiation Exposure	1-2 x Mammogram Dose	None
Compression Pain	Yes	No
Contrast Requires Small Angiocath	No	Yes
Biopsy Frequency - Large Bore Needle	5%	2%
Length of Study	9 mins	7.5 mins
Number of Women per Hour	3.5	3.5
Breast Size Affects Results	Yes	No
Radiologist's Time to Read a Study	2 x Mammogram	1/2 Mammogram
Ability to Compare to a Baseline Study	Difficult	Easy
Cancer Detection Timeframe	2-3 Months Earlier Detection	5-6 Years Earlier Detection
Ability to Eliminate Radiation Therapy	Low	High
Ability to Eliminate Chemotherapy	Low	High
Cancer Survival Impact	Minimal or Zero	Maximum Possible
Insurance/Personal Dollar Savings	Minimal or Zero	≈ 2,000%

### Local Michigan Cost Analysis

Factor	Tomosynthesis	MRI
Cost Per Study (Includes occasional Add Views, U/S, etc.)	\$309	\$395
MRI Cost/Year (18 month interval for 95% of Women)		\$263
MRI Cost/Year (12 month interval with Star Pattern 5%)		\$20
Cost per Year for Women with Dense Breasts	\$309	\$283
Cost per Year for Women without Dense Breasts	\$232	\$195 (Mamm Cost)
Total Average Cost per Year for All Women	\$271	\$239
Cost In Excess of Screening Breast MRI	<b>\$32</b>	