



Long Beach Memorial

December 17, 2009

Dear Breast Center Patient,

As you may have heard recently in the news, the federally funded U.S. Preventative Services Task Force (USPSTF) has recommended changing screening mammography guidelines. In particular, the panel suggests screening mammography every 2 years between the ages of 50 and 74 only and discourages self-breast examination.

We want you to know that the MemorialCare Breast Center strongly disagrees with these new recommendations. Among the numerous well-respected medical organizations who also strongly disagree are the American Cancer Society, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American College of Radiology.

Screening mammograms save lives. In fact, screening mammography is one of the most important healthcare advances in the past 40 years and has resulted in a 30 percent decrease in patients dying from breast cancer. Early screening, beginning at age 40, catches aggressive breast cancers. Yearly screening catches smaller cancers compared to biannual screening, and smaller cancers are easier to treat and cure. Last year 11% of the women with screening-detected cancers were under the age of 50.

Your health is important to us. We encourage you to continue following the evidence-based screening practices that have significantly decreased the death rate from breast cancer in this country.

**Continue to have your mammograms annually beginning at age 40.
Continue your self breast exams monthly.
Continue to have a yearly clinical breast exam by your health care provider.**

If you have any questions, or would like to speak with us, please contact our Cancer Answers hotline at (562) 933-0900.

In health,

Handwritten signature of Angela Sie in black ink.

Angela Sie, M.D.
Imaging Director

Handwritten signature of Gretchen Stipek in black ink.

Gretchen Stipek, M.D.
Breast Radiologist

Handwritten signature of Brooke Caldwell in black ink.

Brooke Caldwell, M.D.
Breast Radiologist