



Ontario Health

January 5th, 2023

Dr. Paula B. Gordon, OBC, MD, FRCPC, FSBI
Clinical Professor, University of British Columbia

Dr. Martin J. Yaffe, C.M., Ph.D., Hon.D.Sc, FRSC
Senior Scientist, Physical Sciences, Sunnybrook Research Institute
Professor of Medical Biophysics and Medical Imaging, University of Toronto
Co-Director, Imaging Research Program, Ontario Institute for Cancer Research

Ms. Jennie Dale, MBA
Executive Director, Dense Breasts Canada

Dear Dr. Gordon, Dr. Yaffe and Ms. Dale,

Thank you for your recent emails about screening through the Ontario Breast Screening Program (OBSP). We understand that you have also contacted Deputy Minister of Health Dr. Catherine Zahn, the Ministry of Health, and the OBSP team. Dr. Zahn has asked Ontario Health to follow up with you directly. Below please see our consolidated response to your emails.

The OBSP currently recommends that most eligible women, trans and nonbinary people ages 50 to 74 get screened with mammography every two years, which is aligned with the recommendations of the Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care (CTFPHC). The CTFPHC 2018 guidelines are based on a review of evidence that includes several screening trials and studies. Also in alignment with the CTFPHC, the OBSP encourages people ages 40 to 49 who are at average risk for breast cancer to make a personal decision about breast cancer screening in consultation with their primary care provider. Based on this personal determination of risk, people under age 50 can be screened for breast cancer outside the OBSP with a referral from their primary care provider.

Ontario Health (Cancer Care Ontario) is closely monitoring the evidence on breast cancer screening in people ages 40 to 49, including any updates from the CTFPHC. For next steps, we:

- are assessing the state of evidence for screening people ages 40 to 49 and will make appropriate recommendations for the OBSP
- have met with Alberta's screening program to understand their decision to include people ages 45 to 49 in their program and will use this information as we assess the state of screening for people ages 40 to 49

- are assessing whether any additional messaging should be added to Ontario Health’s website to enhance primary care awareness regarding screening options for people ages 40 to 49 who are at average risk
- are working with our scientific leadership to assess Ontario-based ethnicity data so we can understand any screening inequities in this age group and develop strategies to address any issues that may exist

Ontario Health (Cancer Care Ontario) is also aware of the importance of informing participants about their breast density. All OBSP screening mammogram reports now contain a BI-RADS breast density measure. By Summer 2023, the OBSP will notify average-risk participants ages 50 to 74 of their breast density by including a participant’s BI-RADS breast density measure in their screening mammogram result letters. Participants are currently encouraged to contact their primary care provider to find out their breast density.

Thank you again for your emails. Going forward, to ensure a timely and coordinated response, please reach out directly to Rebecca Truscott (rebecca.truscott@ontariohealth.ca), Senior Director, Cancer Control & Evidence Integration with any further questions.

Sincerely,



Judy Linton
Executive Vice President Clinical Institutes and
Quality Programs & Chief Nursing Executive
Ontario Health



Dr. Chris Simpson
Executive Vice President (Medical) and Chief
Medical Officer
Ontario Health

cc. Dr. Catherine Zahn, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health
Matthew Anderson, Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Health
Rebecca Truscott, Senior Director, Cancer Control & Evidence Integration, Ontario Health