he.minister@gov.sk.ca or MLA address

Dear Minister or MLA\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

I am writing to you today about two breast cancer screening practices in our province that are costing lives:

1. women aged 40-46 face barriers in access to breast cancer screening and
2. women with dense breasts cannot access supplemental screening

**Women 40-46:** In Saskatchewan, women 47 and up can self-refer for a mammogram. Women 40-46 still require a requisition. It is important to note that 17% of breast cancers and 17.5% of breast cancer deaths occur in women in their 40's. Cancer in this age group is more aggressive, which leads to increased mortality rates.  Early detection is critical to avoiding the most invasive and highly aggressive medical care and saving lives. Studies have shown that women in their 40's who get mammograms have a 44% lower mortality rate from breast cancer than those who are not screened.

Many jurisdictions in Canada provide women with the option to self-refer in the 40s (BC NS PEI YT NB ON AB NWT). Saskatchewan lags behind. For these and other reasons, routine screening and self-referral should start at age 40. Early detection isn’t just life-saving; it’s cost-effective. Treating Stage 1 cancer averages $39,000, compared to $371,000 for Stage 4.

**Supplemental screening:** Women with Dense Breasts Are Denied Life-Saving Screening

Mammography is not enough for women with dense breasts. Dense tissue appears white on a mammogram—just like cancer—creating a masking effect that hides up to 40% of cancers in the densest breasts. Tragically, these cancers are often only discovered when a woman feels a lump after a “normal” mammogram. The cancers are frequently diagnosed at later stages, requiring mastectomy, chemotherapy, and leading to worse prognoses. Supplementary screening methods like ultrasound and MRI can detect cancers missed by mammography. Yet, Saskatchewan denies access to these essential tools.

Other jurisdictions in Canada already recognize the urgency of supplementary screening

* British Columbia, Alberta, and NWT: Offer screening ultrasounds for women with dense breasts (Categories C and D).
* Ontario**:** Provides annual ultrasounds for Category D and biannual MRIs, with ultrasounds for Category C.
* Quebec: Screens Category D women with a family history.
* PEI: Has committed to providing ultrasounds for Category D women.

**What Needs to Change**

The Government of Saskatchewan must ensure that women 40-46 can self-refer and that women with dense breasts have access to screening ultrasound or MRI. It’s time to prioritize early detection.

**Sincerely,**
[Your Name]
[Your Riding]