Charlotte Radiology expands access to advanced mammography technology

Tomosynthesis (3D Mammography) to be offered at the Monroe Breast Center beginning the week of November 18, 2013.

CHARLOTTE, N.C., Nov. 18, 2013 – Charlotte Radiology, the area’s largest mammography provider, is expanding access to digital breast tomosynthesis (also known as 3D mammography) by offering this procedure at Charlotte Radiology’s Monroe Breast Center (on the campus of Carolinas Medical Center-Union, 1550 Faulk Street, Suite 1200). The practice introduced tomosynthesis to the Charlotte market in August, and will begin providing this advanced technology in Union County the week of November 18.

Dr. Amy Sobel, a specialist in breast imaging for Charlotte Radiology noted, “This revolutionary technology reveals greater detail, which may help us detect cancer sooner. Our Charlotte area patients have welcomed this procedure, and we believe it’s important to broaden our geographic reach so that women across the region have the option of choosing tomosynthesis.” Since the launch of tomosynthesis, Charlotte Radiology has seen more than 600 patients at its Pineville Breast Center site, the first site in the Charlotte area to offer the new technology.

Tomosynthesis creates multiple images or “slices” that step through the breast tissue. This allows the radiologist to see more clearly and helps reduce the impact of overlapping breast tissue. The process is performed at the same time as a traditional 2D mammogram, on the same scanner with no noticeable difference in the experience or time expended for the patient.

“Tomosynthesis gives us the ability to see masses, particularly in dense breast tissue, that we might have difficulty detecting with traditional mammography. Because it reduces the overlap of tissue, most investigators have found that it leads to fewer callbacks and therefore less anxiety for women,” explains Dr. Matthew Gromet, Chief of Mammography at Charlotte Radiology.

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The procedure was approved by the FDA in February 2011 and is a modification of the current 2D (digital) mammography. The exam is performed on state-of-the-art digital equipment, which is able to obtain multiple low-dose images of a compressed breast from different angles. These images are then viewed individually and dynamically. Radiologists are able to view breast tissue layer by layer, one millimeter at a time, similar to a CT scan.

Tomosynthesis is an optional service for the patient, which supplements the traditional mammographic images. While 2D digital mammography remains the gold standard for early detection, 3D images can offer better visualization for radiologists who are helping certain groups of patients – particularly those with dense breasts. A woman’s breast tissue density is determined by a prior mammogram.

“All women may benefit from tomosynthesis; however, there is increased benefit to women with dense breast tissue because dense breast tissue may look similar to cancer tissue. 2D mammography can’t always differentiate between cancer and dense breast tissue” says Dr. Deborah Agisim, a specialist in breast imaging for Charlotte Radiology. “For example, if a 2D mammogram detects an area of concern, the radiologists may want to further investigate with a diagnostic mammogram, ultrasound or biopsy. Looking at the same breast tissue in 3D, the radiologist may now see that the tissue is in fact normal breast tissue. In this scenario, the patient likely avoided a callback for an additional mammogram.”

The radiation dose is approximately the same for tomosynthesis as it is for traditional 2D mammography. So the radiation is roughly doubled when doing a 2D mammogram along with tomosynthesis. Even this combined dose is still below the FDA-regulated limit for 2D mammography and has been found by the FDA to be safe and effective for patient use.

Insurance does not yet cover the tomosynthesis portion of the mammogram. However, the 2D portion of the exam is covered 100 percent by most plans. Patients will be required to pay an out-of-pocket fee of $50 at the time of service if they opt to supplement their mammogram with tomosynthesis.

**What are the known benefits?**

**Reduced Callbacks:** Tomosynthesis allows the radiologist to look at different layers of the breast tissue, helping to distinguish normal breast tissue from abnormal breast tissue. Information from these additional views is believed to lead to fewer callbacks and therefore less anxiety for women.

**Better Visualization:** Radiologists can better determine the size, shape and location of an abnormality with tomosynthesis.

**Improved Sensitivity:** By minimizing the impact of overlapping breast tissue, tomosynthesis may improve breast cancer screening and early detection.
To learn more about 3D Mammography, and find photos, videos and fast facts, please visit www.charlotteradiology.com/tomo.

**About Charlotte Radiology Breast Center**

Since 1967, Charlotte Radiology is the area’s imaging experts and is one of the largest and most progressive radiology groups in the country. Currently, we offer 13 breast center locations (including 2 mobile breast centers) - all accredited by the American College of Radiology, certified by the FDA and recognized as a Breast Imaging Center of Excellence.

Our breast imaging team consists of mammography certified technologists and board-certified physicians specialized in mammography. Their expertise and skill are crucial in the accurate detection and successful treatment of breast cancer. By continuously offering compassionate care combined with the most advanced equipment available – such as digital mammography, breast MRI and computer-aided detection - we are the first choice for more than 100,000 women a year. Learn more online at www.charlotteradiology.com.

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