



**NL Health
Services**

Memorandum

To: All Physicians and Nurse Practitioners
From: Kenneth Baird, Vice President
Date: August 15, 2023
Re: Update on Mammography Review Findings

I provide you with this update on the outcome of the Mammography Review conducted in 2022, to reassure you that diagnostic and screening Mammography services provided by NL Health Services and our Radiologists are of a high standard and continue to deliver high-quality care and service to the patients of the province. I ask for your assistance in reaffirming this message with your patients should they have any concerns or reluctance to have a mammogram.

In August 2022, the then Eastern Health (EH), Labrador-Grenfell Health (LGH) and Western Health (WH) Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) were notified by the Department of Health and Community Services (DHCS) that Central Regional Health Authority (CH) had identified that some mammogram studies had been viewed on 3-megapixel monitors rather than 5-megapixel monitors, which is the current stated standard under the Canadian Association of Radiologists (CAR) Practice Guidelines and Technical Standards for Breast Imaging and Intervention and Health Canada Safety Code 36-3.2.4. Given the information provided by DHCS, the RHA CEOs requested the then Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information (NLCHI) to undertake a limited data extraction audit to determine the extent to which mammography images were being interpreted on a 3-megapixel monitors.

Following the audit, a Quality Assurance Activity Committee was established pursuant to the Patient Safety Act NL (2017) to undertake a review of the situation to determine how and why this situation occurred and identify system improvements that could be made. Through this review, it was determined that a total of 13,970 out of 222,672 exams (6.3%) across the province had been viewed utilizing a 3-megapixel monitor. All 13,970 examinations were re-read by a panel of Radiologists using a 5-megapixel monitor. Upon second-read review, 13,927 exams had no change in findings (99.7% concordance), with 47 exams requiring additional follow-up (0.3% discordance). Without diminishing the impact for the 47 patients who may have experienced a change in their outcome as a result of follow-up investigation, the comparative evidence from peer-reviewed literature suggests a normal threshold for discordance rates between 8 to 9%.

The Quality Review identified several systemic procedural and workflow issues which were impacting the reporting of Mammography exams throughout the RHAs. The resulting recommendations arising from this review were as follows:

- Establish a process to oversee the development, implementation, dissemination and evaluation of standardized policies and procedures, and a quality assurance program for mammography services, incorporating both the Breast Screening and Diagnostic Mammography services.
- Adopt a mammography accreditation program for all mammography sites within the province.
- Complete an environmental scan for certified mammography workstations to provide adequate access, and appropriate locations, and implement a consistent inventory control and accountability process to support the tracking location of monitors provincially.
- Label all certified mammography workstations with unique identifiers.
- Establish standard written agreements for Medical Imaging practice groups providing consultation services.
- Continue the advancement of Just Culture (JC) throughout the RHAs including education of the JC philosophy and principles at all organizational levels.
- Provide education of legislative requirements and protections of the Patient Safety Act NL and quality assurance activities/processes.

NL Health Services (NLHS) medical imaging program is aggressively pursuing the implementation of all the recommendations. The environmental scan of our technical infrastructure has been completed. NLHS will be implementing a provincial accreditation program for all Mammography units and reporting Radiologists, and NLHS has begun the education on Just Culture.

Quality reviews are an important protected process under the Patient Safety Act NL (2017) that supports NLHS maintaining a strong commitment to quality and patient safety, ensuring we have the best culture of safety possible.

NL Health Services is committed to providing the best possible care for breast health. Mammograms are an important screening test for the early detection of breast cancer, and I ask for your assistance in sharing this message of reassurance with your patients in the hopes of rebuilding patient confidence in our Mammography services.

Kenneth Baird
Vice President
NL Health Services