

Assembly Member
Rebecca A. Seawright

Assembly District 76



ALBANY OFFICE
Room 650 LOB, Albany, NY 12248
Phone: (518) 455-5676
seawright@nysassembly.gov

DISTRICT OFFICE
1485 York Avenue
New York, NY 10075
Phone: (212) 288-4369

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Contact: Katarina Matic

212.288.4607

SEAWRIGHT'S 3-D MAMMOGRAPHY SCREENING BILL PASSES BOTH HOUSES

Legislation to ensure access to early breast cancer detection

NEW YORK, N.Y. – On Thursday, June 15, 2017, Assembly Member Rebecca A. Seawright announced that A.5677/S.4150, legislation which would expand access to breast cancer screenings without cost sharing, to include breast tomosynthesis screenings also known as 3-D mammography, passed in the State Senate. In March 2017, Seawright obtained passage of this bill 146-0 in the Assembly and now, it will be delivered to the Governor for consideration.

Breast tomosynthesis or 3-D mammography uses x-rays to collect multiple images of the breast from several angles and creates a 3-D image of the breast. Studies have shown it is more effective in detecting cancer in dense breast tissue. Dense breast tissue is one of the strongest predictors of risk for breast cancer.

"It is important to continue to expand access to breast cancer screenings. Breast cancer is one of the most common cancers in New York State. Each year in New York, over 15,000 women are diagnosed with breast cancer. This bill clarifies that insurers would cover 3-D mammograms without co-pays or deductibles. Early detection is key," said **Assembly Member Rebecca A. Seawright** (D- Upper East Side, Yorkville and Roosevelt Island).

State Senator Joseph Griffo (R-Rome) said: "Thousands of women in New York are diagnosed with breast cancer every year, and the best way to confront this devastating disease is to ensure that women have undeniable access to the most reliable methods of breast cancer screening. I am so proud that the Legislature has approved my efforts with Assembly Member Seawright to require insurance coverage for 3-D mammography, so that more of our family and friends can hope to overcome this life-changing diagnosis. For the sake of our mothers and sisters, our friends and daughters, I urge the Governor to sign this bill so that New York can continue to be a leader in protecting women's health."

"Digital breast tomosynthesis (DBT) provides higher cancer detection rates and fewer patient callbacks for additional testing, saving time and reducing stress for patients as well as reducing the costs of multiple screenings. The passage of this legislation means that more women will have access to this potentially life-saving cancer screening," said **Dr. Elizabeth Morris, Chief, Breast Imaging Service, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center**.

"3-D mammography has been shown in recent studies to find more cancers than more traditional forms of breast screening, as well as resulting in fewer false positive test results. A false positive result can create an extreme physical and psychological toll on the patient, as well as creating the need for further testing. I am

pleased to be a sponsor on this bill because it will require insurers in New York to cover this procedure, which is rapidly gaining popularity in the medical community, and which is proving to be a more reliable form of screening for breast cancer," said **Assembly Member Anthony Brindisi** (D – Utica).

"Today is a momentous day for the people of the state of New York," said **Dr. Christy Gamble, Director of Health Policy and Legislative Affairs at the Black Women's Health Imperative**. "At a time when we are urging federal policymakers to ensure all people, regardless of their income, health status, or geographic location have access to affordable, quality health coverage, it's comforting to know that there are state policymakers, such as Assemblywoman Seawright, who are fighting to remove the barriers to life-saving health care for residents of their state. Although the incidence of breast cancer is nearly the same, Black women have a 41% higher rate of mortality from breast cancer when compared to their White counterparts. In addition, Black women tend to have much denser breast tissue, which is a strong predictor of breast cancer. This law will expand access to breast tomosynthesis (or 3D mammography), an innovative technology that has the potential to save the lives of many women by providing an earlier and more accurate diagnosis of breast cancer. This is especially true for women with dense breast tissue. Early detection remains the key to improving breast cancer survival rates for Black women and all women in the state of New York."

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