

Ask Dr. Miller



October 2016

Breast Cancer Awareness Month Announcements

#1 - Addition of 3D mammography to NBCCEDP breast cancer screening coverage

The NBCCEDP will include 3D mammography (tomosynthesis) as a reimbursable procedure effective immediately. The appropriate CPT codes that will be added are 77063 and G0279. As per instructions from the CMS guidance for Medicare reimbursement:

- 77063 should be listed as a separate code in addition to the code for the primary mammogram code, 77057. Do not report with this code with 77055 or 77056.
- G0279 should be listed as a separate code in addition to G0204 or G0206 for the primary mammogram.
- The codes 77061 and 77062 not allowed as they are not approved by Medicare.

#2 - Patient Education Campaign on Breast Reconstruction after Mastectomy

A recent Senate mandate has directed the HHS Secretary to plan and implement an education campaign to inform breast cancer patients anticipating surgery about the availability and coverage of breast reconstruction, prostheses, and other options. The campaign's initial goal is to inform women and providers through dissemination of a consumer-focused National Cancer Institute (NCI) factsheet about reconstruction that can be found at <https://www.cancer.gov/types/breast/reconstruction-fact-sheet>.

The Women's Health Cancer Rights Act of 1998 mandates that group health plans and health insurance companies that offer coverage for mastectomies have been required to cover breast reconstruction and prostheses. Published studies report that a majority of women eligible for breast reconstruction following breast cancer are not informed of their care options. This is especially problematic for members of racial and ethnic minority groups, who are even less likely to be informed of their care options. According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, 33 percent of eligible women with breast cancer undergo breast reconstruction and published research reports that nearly 70 percent of women are not informed of their care options by their general surgeon.

Note the upcoming events:

- A bilingual Twitter chat will be held on Wednesday, October 26 from 1 – 2 pm ET.

- NCI will host a Facebook Live event with health professionals to explain the basics of the fact sheet, what information is new/most important, and what patients need to know.
- OWH will host a webinar with participating partner Federal Agencies to educate health care professionals on women's rights for reconstruction.

Please share with your providers and clients. Let's get the word out!

#3 - New MMWR publication on trends of breast cancer incidence and death rates

CDC recently published an MMWR article on breast cancer rates. It reported that black women and white women now have the same breast cancer incidence rates. This is new from the previous years where white women have had higher incidence rates than black women. During 1999–2013, breast cancer incidence went down among white women and slightly up among black women. Now the rates are the same.

Deaths from breast cancer are going down among both black and white women. But breast cancer death rates are still 40% higher among black women than white women. Deaths rates are dropping faster among younger women. In fact, the disparity in breast cancer deaths between black and white women appear to be dissipating among women under 50 years old.

The look of breast cancer is changing, but the burden of disease and death remains significant. Let's keep up the good work to reduce both the burden and the disparities. This article shows an interesting way that you can look at your local data for program planning among the populations you serve.

Richardson LC, Henley J, Miller J, Massetti G, Thomas CC. Patterns and trends in black-white differences in breast cancer incidence and mortality—United States, 1999–2013. *MMWR* 2016;65(40):1093–1098. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6540a1.htm>