

The Texas legislature recently passed a law known as “Henda’s Law” which is known as a “Dense Breast Law”. Dense breast laws are becoming popular in the nation and have become politically correct behavior in our state legislatures. The laws, in some form or fashion, require federally certified mammography facilities to inform women with dense breast tissue that they do have dense breast tissue.

It is illegal to modify the notification phrase. The law does not define “dense breast tissue”. We have decided that patients will be notified of breast density type 2 to type 4 per American College of Radiology BIRADS description that applies as follows:

“If your mammogram demonstrates that you have dense breast tissue, which could hide abnormalities, and you have other risk factors for breast cancer that have been identified, you might benefit from supplemental screening tests that may be suggested by your ordering physician. Dense breast tissue, in and of itself, is a relatively common condition. Therefore, this information is not provided to cause undue concern, but rather to raise your awareness and to promote discussion with your physician regarding the presence of other risk factors, in addition to dense breast tissue. A report of your mammography results will be sent to you and your physician. You should contact your physician if you have any questions or concerns regarding this report.” **(Copied directly from the law: TX HB 2102)**

Our Texas law mandates compliance by January 1, 2012. The Woman’s Hospital of Texas will fulfill obligation to notify patients. The law directs patients to question their physicians regarding this issue. A useful reference is cited below to give you an idea of the value of Whole breast Ultrasound as a supplemental screening modality.

A systematic review of studies involving mammography and ultrasound performed for screening of breast cancer in women with dense breasts [ACR Breast density types 2 to 4] identified primarily invasive cancers with a mean size of 9.9 mm, with 90% of the cancers being node negative. Biopsy rate was high at 2.3% to 4.7% with positive predictive value of 8.4 %-13.7% for those biopsied because of an abnormal finding on the Ultrasound examination. **[Nothacker M et al. Early detection of Breast Cancer: benefits and risks of supplemental breast ultrasound in asymptomatic women with Mammographically dense breast tissue. A systematic review. BMC Cancer 9:1-9, 2009].**

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