NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

Senator Fuschillo Announces New Law to Help Increase Early Detection of Breast Cancer Has Taken Effect

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. January 24, 2013

ISSUE: **WOMEN'S HEALTH**

New Law Will Increase Women's Awareness of Dense Breast Tissue

Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R-Merrick) announced today that a law he supported to improve early breast cancer detection is now in effect. The new law will increase women's awareness of the presence of dense breast tissue found during a mammography exam. Dense breast tissue can make it more difficult to detect tumors.

"Raising women's awareness about a known breast cancer risk factor will help save lives," said Senator Fuschillo. "Providing this information to those with dense breast tissue, when combined with routine breast cancer screenings, will help increase early detection of breast cancer and improve patients' ability to make educated decisions about their health."

The new law requires educational information to be provided to women with dense breast tissue. Patients will receive a mammography report in plain, non-technical language about a finding of dense breast tissue and will also be given information about how they should discuss the potential benefit of further screenings with their physician.

Mammogram films of breasts with higher density are harder to read and interpret than those of less dense breasts. Approximately 40 to 50 percent of tumors in dense tissue may not be detected since this condition obscures their presence. According to leading medical studies, breast cancer is four to six times more likely in women with dense breast tissue.

In spite of the risk factor presented by dense breast tissue, a Harris Interactive survey found that 95 percent of women do not know their breast density, and less than one-in-ten women learn about breast density from their physician. Prior to this new law, there were no legal requirements for patients in New York to be alerted to breast density.