

Governor Rell Signs Breast Density Bill Into Law That Will Focus on the Early Detection of Cancer



Senator Crisco's breast density bill is signed into law by Governor Rell. Featured left to right: Cheryl Cepelak and Anne Morris of the Susan G. Komen for the Cure, Representative Steve Fontana, Governor Rell, Nancy Cappello, Senator Crisco, and Joseph Cappello.

During a ceremony at the Capitol, Governor Rell signed an important health care bill into law that was introduced by Senator Joseph Crisco (D-Woodbridge), the co-chair of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee. It requires more communication of mammographic breast density information to patients to help with the early detection of breast cancer. Nancy M. Cappello, Ph.D of Woodbury, a breast cancer survivor, who was a strong advocate for the legislation, also attended the ceremony.

S.B. 458 requires all mammography reports given to a patient on and after October 1, 2009 to include information about breast density. When applicable, the report must include the following notice: If your mammogram demonstrates that you have dense breast tissue, which could hide small abnormalities, you might benefit from supplementary screening tests, which can include a breast ultrasound screening or a breast MRI examination, or both, depending on your individual risk factors.

“This has been a long crusade for Nancy Cappello, who has been working for several years to increase awareness about this issue. We made progress in 2006 when the General Assembly approved a bill to expand ultrasound screening to focus on dense breast tissue,” said Senator Crisco. “This year we refined our legislation to make sure radiologists inform physicians if a woman has dense breast tissue. This will lead to the early detection of breast cancer and help to reduce pain and suffering and save lives. I’m pleased the governor has signed this bill into law.”

“When I was diagnosed five years ago with a late stage breast cancer diagnosis, after having a “normal” mammogram weeks before and “normal” mammograms since age 40, I was told by one of my physicians that the mammogram didn’t find the cancer because I had “dense” breast tissue. This was the first time that I was made aware of the fact that mammograms are limited in finding cancer in women

with dense breast tissue,” said Dr. Nancy Cappello. “During my treatment, I pledged to ensure that women are made aware of this important issue. Now, I’m thrilled and it warms my heart that communication of breast density will now be standardized in the state of Connecticut and this information will be provided because of this new law. This is critically important for the early detection of cancer.”