

Black nurses recommend “gold standard” for mammography

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NBNA President Dr. Debra A. Toney issued the following statement today on the new breast cancer screening recommendations from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force: The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) has made new recommendations on mammography screening for women. It now advocates that mammography screening should begin at age 50. The recommendations are based on a model that focuses on the balance of risks and benefits of women having their first mammogram at the age 40 or the age 50; and the need to have a mammogram and annually versus every two years.

The National Black Nurses Association (NBNA) is recommending that women continue to follow the “gold standard” of breast health screening as detailed by the American Cancer Society, that a woman begins an annual mammogram screening at age 40. NBNA also recommends that all women continue to use self breast exams as explained by their health care provider.

NBNA is concerned that thousands of women are diagnosed with breast cancer annually. Only half of breast cancer diagnosed in African American women is found in the earliest stages, compared to 62% in white women. The major reason for the difference is a lack of mammograms and inadequate screenings. There continues to be a health care disparity gap among African American women who are diagnosed at later stages of breast cancer; and who die at an earlier age and more frequently with breast cancer.

The NBNA will continue to rely on evidenced based guidelines and will advocate and educate women as we always have. Mammograms have always been an important lifesaving tool in the fight against breast cancer and our strategy for saving the lives of all women will not change. Therefore, NBNA recommends to its membership and to all women that you keep doing what you are doing, get a mammogram starting at age 40, have an annual mammogram and continue self breast exams. These are the first line of defense tools that save lives.

The mission of the National Black Nurses Association is to provide a forum for collective action by Black nurses to investigate, define and advocate for the health care needs of African Americans and to implement strategies that ensure access to health care, equal to, or above health care standards of the larger society.