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Pink Lemonade Project – U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Reverses Screening Age for Breast Cancer

Vancouver, Washington, May 9, 2023 – Pink Lemonade Project (PLP) learned this morning that the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force has reversed its guidelines to begin annual screening from age of 50 back to the age of 40. Alarmed by an increase in breast cancer diagnoses among younger women and persistently high death rates among Black women in particular, health experts on Tuesday offered a stark revision to the standard medical advice on mammograms.

Women of all racial and ethnic backgrounds who are at average risk for breast cancer should start getting regular mammograms at age 40 instead of waiting until they are 50, as previously recommended.

In 2009, the U.S.P.S.T.F. raised the age for starting routine mammograms to 50, from 40. At the time, researchers were concerned that earlier screening would do more harm than good.

The group issues influential guidelines on preventive health, and its recommendations usually are widely adopted in the United States. But the new advice, issued as a draft, represents something of a reversal.

“This recommendation is coming more in line with recommendations from American Society of Breast Surgeons and more recent NCCN guidelines. This is fantastic for women of color and brings the recommendations closer to equity. However, younger women, less than 50, tend to have more aggressive tumors so every other year screening doesn’t fit that biology. We continue to recommend screening annually and evaluation of risk in every woman at age 30 as some women may need to start screening earlier than 40 or have genetic risk assessment and testing,” stated Dr. Nathalie Johnson, Medical Director of Legacy Cancer Institute, Legacy Breast Health Centers, and Surgical Oncologist.

There have been troubling trends in breast cancer in recent years. They include an apparent increase in the number of cancers diagnosed in women under 50 and a failure to narrow the survival gap for younger Black women, who die of breast cancer at twice the rate of white women of the same age.

“This is a crucial reversal, in guidelines, which will save more the lives of younger women and women of color, offer earlier treatment options, and provide greater quality

of life for breast cancer patients, survivors and families across the country. When 1 in 7 is diagnosed locally, and the national average is 1 in 8, this reversal sheds a brighter light for the 42 counties we serve in SW Washington and Oregon,” said Susan Stearns, CEO.

The new recommendation covers more than 20 million women in the United States between the ages of 40 and 49. In 2019, [about 60 percent of women in this age group](#) said they had gotten a mammogram in the past two years, compared with 76 percent of women aged 50 to 64 and 78 percent of women aged 65 to 74.

ABOUT PINK LEMONADE PROJECT

Pink Lemonade Project (PLP), founded in 2010 by Drs. Allen and Cassie Gabriel, was created with the mission to educate, empower, and support people affected by breast cancer. PLP is a community-based nonprofit organization with the goals of providing emotional, screening, psychological, financial and community support to increase the survival rate and improve the quality of life for breast cancer patients and their families across SW Washington and all of Oregon.

Pink Lemonade has experienced a significant evolution and growth. Pink Lemonade saw exponential need and served 2,572 people impacted by breast cancer in 2022, a 129% increase over two years. Learn more at pinklemonadeproject.org.

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