



## The American Society of Breast Surgeons Opposes US Task Force Changes in Mammography Screening Guidelines

November 17, 2009—Columbia, MD—The American Society of Breast Surgeons is strongly opposed to the recommendations released November 16, 2009 by the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF.) We believe there is sufficient data to support annual mammography screening for women age 40 and older. We also believe the breast cancer survival rate of women between 40 and 50 will improve from the increased use of digital mammographic screening, which is superior to older plain film techniques in detecting breast cancer in that age group.

While we recognize that there will be a number of benign biopsies, we also recognize that mammography is the optimal screening tool for the early diagnosis of breast cancer in terms of cost-effectiveness, practical use, and accuracy. To restrict its use will mean that breast cancers will go undiagnosed for an unacceptable period of time. This restriction of mammographic screening defeats the goals of early detection, which often allows for breast conserving surgery and avoidance of chemotherapy.

The (USPSTF) also does not make a recommendation for mammography screening for women age 75 and older. Women in this age group are at the greatest risk for breast cancer and at the point where mammography is most sensitive.

We believe these recommendations effectively turn back the clock to pre-mammography days by making the diagnosis of breast cancer occur only when the tumor is large enough to be felt on a physical exam. The Society will continue to advocate for routine annual mammography screening for all women beginning at age 40. Mammography screening reduces breast cancer mortality and saves lives.

For more information contact the Society at [www.breastsurgeons.org](http://www.breastsurgeons.org).

The American Society of Breast Surgeons, the primary leadership organization for general surgeons who treat patients with breast disease, is committed to continually improving the practice of breast surgery by being an advocate for surgeons who seek excellence in the care of breast patients. This mission is accomplished by serving as a forum for the exchange of ideas and by promoting education, research, and the development of advanced surgical techniques.