

105TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 40

Expressing the sense of the House concerning the need for accurate guidelines for breast cancer screening for women between the ages of 40 and 49.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 5, 1997

Mr. TOWNS submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House concerning the need for accurate guidelines for breast cancer screening for women between the ages of 40 and 49.

Whereas the National Cancer Institute is the lead Federal agency for research on the causes, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer;

Whereas health professionals and consumers throughout the United States regard the guidelines of the National Cancer Institute as reliable scientific and medical advice;

Whereas it has been proven that intervention through routine screening for breast cancer through mammography can save the lives of women at a time when medical science is unable to prevent this disease;

Whereas the National Cancer Institute issued a guideline in 1989 recommending that women in their forties seek mammograms, but rescinded this guideline in 1993;

Whereas in 1993, it was difficult to have the same degree of scientific confidence about the benefit of mammography for women between the ages of 40 and 49 as existed for women between the ages of 50 and 69 due to inherent limitations in the studies that were conducted as of that date;

Whereas at that time, the American Cancer Society and 21 other national medical organizations and health and consumer groups were at variance with the decision of the National Cancer Institute to rescind the guidelines of the Institute for mammography for women between the ages of 40 and 49;

Whereas the statement of scientific fact on breast cancer screening issued by the National Cancer Institute on December 3, 1993, caused widespread confusion and concern among women and physicians, eroded confidence in mammography, and reinforced barriers and negative attitudes that keep women of all ages from being screened;

Whereas in 1995, investigators found a 24 percent lower death rate among women who received mammograms in their forties when the world's population-based trials were combined;

Whereas in 1996, Swedish researchers in 2 studies found a 44 and 36 percent lower death rate among women who received mammograms in their forties;

Whereas a number of studies have shown that breast tumors in women under the age of 50 may grow far more rapidly

than in older women, suggesting that annual mammograms are of value to women in this age group;

Whereas a disproportionate number of African-American women are affected by this life-threatening disease, and have a 25 percent higher mortality rate than other women because breast cancer is not detected early enough;

Whereas on January 23, 1997, a panel convened by the National Institutes of Health reviewed these and other compelling studies but decided not to recommend that the National Cancer Institute reissue its earlier guidelines;

Whereas the Director of the National Cancer Institute and other major national organizations, including the American Cancer Society, expressed surprise and disappointment with this decision;

Whereas the majority (approximately 80 percent) of women who are diagnosed with breast cancer have no identifiable risk for this disease;

Whereas breast cancer is the single leading cause of death for women in their forties and fifties, and a leading cause of death for women between the ages of 30 and 60; and

Whereas more women will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year in their forties (over 33,000 women) than in their fifties: Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House that—
- 2 (1) adequately designed and conducted studies
- 3 are needed to further determine the benefits of
- 4 screening women between the ages of 40 and 49

1 through mammography and other emerging tech-
2 nologies; and

3 (2)(A) the House strongly urges the Advisory
4 Panel for the National Cancer Institute to consider
5 reissuing the guideline rescinded in 1993 for mam-
6 mography for women between the ages of 40 and 49
7 when it convenes in February; or

8 (B) until there is more definitive data, direct
9 the public to consider guidelines issued by other or-
10 ganizations.

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