

WOMEN'S CAUCUS

Smead.

FLEX-I-VISION® HANGING FOLDER

HASTINGS, MN
LOS ANGELES-CHICAGO-LOGAN, OH
McGREGOR, TX-LOCUST GROVE, GA



PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

WOMEN'S CAUCUS

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

file

The Congressional Women's Caucus and Health Care Reform

The Congressional Women's Caucus are right to call for a comprehensive benefits package spelled out in law, and for preventive care focusing on early detection and treatment of breast cancer.

Women are increasingly the victims of life-threatening illness, yet still anchor the bottom of our medical research agenda. Of all the health problems women face, however, breast cancer is the deadliest:

- One in nine women in the U.S. will develop breast cancer in her lifetime. (National Breast Cancer Coalition)
- 2.6 million women in the U.S. have breast cancer today, and this year another 182,000 American women will be diagnosed with the disease, approximately one woman every three minutes. (National Breast Cancer Coalition)

The Health Security Act addresses women's health -- and the threat of breast cancer -- aggressively and comprehensively, guaranteeing all women coverage, regardless of whether they are healthy or sick, married or single, working or unemployed, wealthy or low income. **And the President's approach will provide unprecedented coverage of preventive care, including mammography. It will coverage a whole schedule of preventive screenings, tests and check-ups at no cost, protection available in only a few of today's insurance policies.**

Coverage of Mammograms and other preventive services under The Health Security Act:

- **Coverage for all women:**
- Women of any age can receive clinical breast exams and mamograms at any time when the patient and doctor feel it is medically necessary or appropriate, and will pay a standard co-pay (for example, ten dollars) set by their plan.
- **Extra coverage for women at risk:**
- Women of any age who are defined to be at risk of breast cancer will receive additional visits, including clinical breast exams and mammograms, *with no cost sharing*.
- **Extra coverage of clinical breast exams and mammograms for certain age groups:**
- For certain age groups, at certain intervals, the routine care women receive becomes free of any cost sharing, so there is no charge when a woman goes to the doctor for these services. From age 20-39, clinician visits are free once every three years, and every other year for women from 40-64. And beginning at age 50 all women would pay nothing for their routine mammogram screening every other year.

- **New investments in combatting breast cancer**
- This year, the National Institute of Health's breast cancer research budget increased by 44 percent, from \$208 million to almost \$300 million.

Under reform, new research initiatives will concentrate on the prevention of illnesses affecting women, including breast cancer, mental health, reproductive health and osteoporosis.

Post-It brand

Fax Transmittal Memo 7672



No. of Pages

Today's Date

Time

To

From

Company

Company

Location

Location

Dept. Charge

Fax #

Telephone #

Fax #

Telephone #

Comments

Original
Disposition:☐ Destroy☐ Return☐ Call for pickup**Executive Committee Officers**

Patricia Schroeder, *Co-chair*
 Olympia Snowe, *Co-chair*
 Cardiss Collins, *Secretary*
 Marcy Kaptur, *Treasurer*

Congressional Caucus

Women's Issues
 Congress of the United States
 Washington, D.C. 20515

2471 Rayburn Building
 (202) 225-6740

Lesley Primmer
 Executive Director

For Release

Tuesday, March 8, 1994

Contact: Susan Wood

(202) 225-6740

Andrea Camp (Schroeder)

(202) 225-4431

Nicholas Graham (Snowe)

(202) 225-6306

NEWS RELEASE**CONGRESSWOMEN CALL FOR BROAD COVERAGE
OF SCREENING MAMMOGRAMS IN HEALTH CARE REFORM**

Today, the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues called for broader coverage of screening mammograms in any health care reform package that comes before the Congress. With a number of committees about to take up various health care reform measures, the Caucus made clear that screening mammograms must be part of any basic benefits package.

"With all the conflicting recommendations that are coming from a number of highly respected sources, women need to know that screening mammograms will be covered," said Caucus Co-Chair Patricia Schroeder (D-Co). "Sending women the message that some mammograms may not be covered sends the message that mammograms are not important -- and that's a dangerous message."

"Women under 50 have been left once again in the now familiar situation that the research is not clear and the experts are still debating," Caucus Co-Chair Rep. Olympia Snowe (R-ME) pointed out. "We unfortunately have only mammograms in our arsenal against breast cancer -- which will strike one out of every eight women over a lifetime -- so until we have something more to offer these women, we can't take this away."

The position established by the Caucus calls for complete coverage (no copayments or

deductibles) of mammograms for women over 50 every one to two years, where screening mammography has been shown to reduce mortality by 30 percent. Coverage should be provided with applicable cost-sharing every two years for women between the ages of 40-49, where mammography has an uncertain impact on mortality but does help in early detection. In addition, an annual clinical breast exam should be covered for all women over forty.

"This just makes explicit what the President and Mrs. Clinton have been saying that they want all along," said Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-NY), Chair of the Caucus Task Force on Women's Health and the Environment, "Women in their forties will be assured of basic coverage of a screening mammogram without having to argue with a health plan or national board that it is medically appropriate."

"The Caucus will be watching and working with the committees of jurisdiction as they take up health care reform," noted Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY), Chair of the Caucus Task Force on Reproductive Choice. "We're not just watching the Clinton plan; we want to make sure that all health care proposals reach this standard."

The position adopted by the Caucus is similar to one recently proposed in a Sense of Congress Resolution introduced by Rep. Ed Towns (D-NY) and several Congresswomen.

Attached is a summary of the Caucus position.





Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues

EMBARGOED UNTIL 10:00 AM, TUESDAY, MARCH 8

Caucus Position on Coverage of Screening Mammography in any Basic Benefits Package

- For women age 50 or older, where mammography has proven to bring about a 30 percent reduction in mortality:

- * Plans should provide free screening mammograms, every one to two years.

- For women age 40-49, where mammography has a less certain impact in reducing mortality, but does help in earlier detection:

- * Plans should cover screening mammograms every two years, with applicable co-pays and deductibles for those reform plans that include cost-sharing.
- * All cost-sharing should be based on a sliding scale, so that it does not constitute a barrier to low-income women receiving care.

- For women of any age:

- * Plans should provide free screening mammograms for any woman at high risk for breast cancer.
- * Plans should cover annual clinical breast exams for women over 40.

Released March 8, 1994