



February 10, 2014

96 Rowley Road  
Woodbury CT 06798

House Health, Insurance and Environment Committee  
Colorado State Capitol  
200 E. Colfax Ave.  
Denver, CO 80203

Re: Support of HB 14-1126 – Dense Breast Tissue Notification  
Testimony of Nancy M Cappello, Ph.D., Founder, Are You Dense Advocacy, Inc.

Honorable Chairperson McCann & Vice Chairperson Schafer & Members of Health, Insurance & Environment Committee:

My name is Nancy Cappello and I reside in Woodbury CT. I write to you in support of **HB 1126** and request that this correspondence be included in the record of the Public Hearing. Your support of **HB 1126** will lead to a **reduction in later stage breast cancers, less aggressive treatments and better life outcomes for women of Colorado and their families – as cancer is a family disease.**

In 2004, I was diagnosed with advanced stage IIIc breast cancer after a decade of 'normal' mammograms. **I first learned about my dense breast tissue after my cancer diagnosis, which was within weeks of what I refer to as my "happy gram" report which stated that the results of my mammogram were "normal."**

My physicians informed me that **my years of mammography screening failed to detect my cancer because of my dense breast tissue.** My cancer was the size of a quarter and has spread to 13 lymph nodes -remember a normal mammogram weeks before. Six surgeries, 5 months of chemotherapy, 24 radiation treatment, life-long medications, countless tests, massive medical costs and a **greater likelihood of dying prematurely from this disease; this is the reality of my advanced stage cancer.**

Searching the scientific journals, I was stunned to discover that my story, while compelling, is common as 40% of women have dense breast tissue. **National surveys report that less than one in 10 women learn about their breast density from their physician.** For more than two decades, research demonstrates that women with dense breast tissue have less than a 50% chance of having their cancer detected by mammography alone. **As density increases, the sensitivity of a mammogram to "see" cancer decreases.** There are additional screening tools, when added to mammography, that significantly increase detection of small, invasive cancers invisible by mammogram. **Dense Breast Tissue is also a well-established predictor of breast cancer risk confirmed by 18 studies – across 8 countries.**

Nancy M Cappello, Ph.D.  
Founder, Are You Dense Advocacy Inc.  
House Health, Insurance & Environment Committee HB 1126  
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Armed with these startling scientific facts, I started working with the Connecticut legislature and, in **2009; Connecticut became the first state in the nation to standardize density reporting to women** through their mammography report. Compelled to action because of the **inaction of the medical community to inform women about this fatal flaw in breast cancer screening**, I founded two nonprofit organizations, **Are You Dense, Inc. and Are You Dense Advocacy, Inc.**, which **has fueled a grass-roots movement across this country of patients turned advocates** - a testament to the fact that there is no shortage of women harmed by their dense tissue.

Following CT's leadership, legislative champions, inspired by advocates, enacted breast density legislation in 14 states (**Texas in 2011; followed by Virginia, New York and California in 2012, Maryland, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Pennsylvania in 2013 & New Jersey on Jan. 21, 2014.**) An additional **10 states, including Colorado, have introduced density reporting bills in 2014.**

**Women can only rely on what their doctors choose to reveal to them.** Unless density reporting is standardized, too many women will falsely have confidence in their "normal" mammography report and yet in reality **their report is far from normal. Later stage cancers are more costly to treat, convey fewer treatment options and poorer survival outcomes.**

Your affirmative support of **HB 1126 will give women of Colorado critical information about their dense breast tissue so they can make an informed decision as they participate in discussions with their health care providers about their personal breast screening surveillance.**

I commend Representatives Buckner and Williams for bringing this critical women's health issue to the committee and ask the committee for its support of **HB 1126.**

Sincerely,

*Nancy M Cappello*

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