



HB 285 v. A

Access to Diagnostic Breast Screening Key Highlights

One in eight women in the U.S. are diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetimes. Breast cancer accounts for one in every three cancer diagnoses in women and is the second most common cause of cancer death in the U.S. Screening mammograms are covered under the Affordable Care Act, but supplemental screening, or diagnostic imaging, are not. **Cost is the primary reason patients forgo diagnostic testing and do not follow up after their initial screening mammogram.**

HB 285 would prohibit insurers that cover diagnostic breast imaging from requiring cost sharing for the procedure, eliminating all out-of-pocket costs. **HB 285 only impacts state regulated commercial health plans under Title 21.**

Eliminating cost-sharing provides more equal access to care and ensures more timely diagnosis of breast cancer, improving health outcomes for those diagnosed with breast cancer and reducing overall costs to the healthcare system.

Terminology:

- **Screening Mammogram:** Two x-rays taken of each breast, a vertical and horizontal scan. This is the initial screening to detect abnormalities, **not used for diagnosis.**
- **Diagnostic Mammogram:** A procedure that comes between the screening mammogram and a biopsy. The x-rays used to conduct a screening mammogram and a diagnostic mammogram are the same, but they are coded differently for insurance purposes.
- **Diagnostic Imaging (Diagnostic Test):** Testing that comes between screening and biopsy. This term can be used when discussing diagnostic mammograms, diagnostic MRIs, and diagnostic ultrasound.
 - **Note:** Sometimes the diagnostic mammogram (x-ray) is insufficient, and a doctor may order an ultrasound or MRI instead. **Diagnostic mammograms, diagnostic MRIs, and diagnostic ultrasounds would all be covered under HB 285.**

Quick Facts:

- **HB 285 does not cover:** Alaska State Employee Health Plans, High Deductible Plans, Medicaid, or Federal Plans.
- Approx. 15% of women are considered high risk for breast cancer and require diagnostic testing for primary or supplemental screening. Of Alaskan women aged 50-74, this is 12,640 individuals.
- Breast cancer diagnosed at Stage I has a 99% survivability rate, while Stage IV (metastatic) can be treated, but is almost always terminal.
- **Breast cancer caught early is less expensive to treat.** Once breast cancer reaches Stage IV, it is up to 5x more expensive to treat.