

## Reps. Murphy, Nadler Introduce Mammography Availability Act

Congressmen Chris Murphy (CT-05) and Jerrold Nadler (NY-08) today introduced The Mammogram and MRI Availability Act, which would require insurance companies that cover diagnostic mammograms or diagnostic breast MRIs to also cover annual screening mammograms or breast MRIs for women 40 and older.

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressmen Chris Murphy (CT-05) and Jerrold Nadler (NY-08) today introduced The Mammogram and MRI Availability Act, which would require insurance companies that cover diagnostic mammograms or diagnostic breast MRIs to also cover annual screening mammograms or breast MRIs for women 40 and older. Although annual screening mammograms, used to detect tumors that cannot be felt, are already covered under Medicare and Medicaid, many private insurers currently cover only diagnostic mammograms, the type of mammography used to confirm the presence of a tumor only after it has been detected.

"It defies logic that many private insurance companies are not already covering more of these potentially life-saving tests. With the technology and know how at their fingertips, they could be in the business of preventing more breast cancer cases. We can't continue to ignore the science. I am pleased to join Congressman Nadler in introducing this bill – he has been a champion for breast cancer screening for years," said Murphy.

"This is about protecting our mothers, wives, sisters and daughters," said Rep. Nadler. "Breast cancer is the second leading cause of death in women in the United States, and the leading cause of death for women between the ages of 40 and 49. That private insurers do not cover screening mammograms for women in their forties is shocking. This bill would ensure that cost is never a factor in deciding whether to get a mammogram. Early detection of breast cancer can help save lives."

The Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Director of the National Cancer Institute (NCI) both recommend that women 40 and older should have a mammogram at least once every one or two years. Earlier this year, the American Cancer Society issued new guidelines urging annual MRIs for women at high risk for breast cancer – a category that covers as many as 1.6 million women in America. A previous NCI study found that mammograms contributed to a pronounced drop in the number of breast cancer deaths.

Tragically, every year, 212,000 American women are diagnosed with breast cancer every year, and more than 40,000 will die from it. While breast cancer is often treatable, early detection is critical to preventing the rapid spread of this deadly disease and beginning effective treatment.

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