

The Provincial Breast Health Strategy

Working together to improve breast cancer prevention, screening & diagnosis in BC

Workforce Team: Input from Summit Participants

Provincial Breast Health Strategy Objective #2:

To increase capacity in the breast health system

- Increase the number of highly qualified professionals in breast cancer screening and diagnostic services through recruitment and retention strategies.

Theme from Summit Breakout Group Discussions:

Recruiting and retaining radiologists – challenges and ideas to overcome

- “Technology Plan” is critical to recruitment and retention - digital vs. analogue environment affects the work, productivity, and subsequent job satisfaction for all disciplines
- Huge challenge to attract radiologists into the area of breast imaging because radiologists are not exposed to much breast imaging mammography in training; compensation is sessional vs. fee for service for local dedicated breast imagers; breast imaging fees are lower than other modalities; and time taken for interventional procedures is not recognized
- Recruitment of foreign trained has challenges including non-standardized training and question of who measures competencies.

Attracting and training mammography technicians – challenges and ways to overcome

- Overall there is a lack of interest for techs to move into breast screening, but digital is a huge draw for many reasons, including a better work environment and instant access to images
- Need to raise the profile of mammography among MRT students and potentially provide incentives, such as sponsorships from employers
- Training - currently no formal training for mammography and no clear career pathway – however, there is an optional certificate in breast imaging offered by CMRT
- Specialization - some employers like techs to do the whole spectrum from screening, diagnostic, ultrasound, and some concerns raised that specialization may increase recruit/retain issues
- Retention - offer flex benefits, staggered retirement, incentives to remain after retirement date, mentoring opportunities, more continuing education
- Cross training - (especially important for rural areas) would help to fill the shortage of sonographers; provide opportunity for tech advancement and the ability to cross between screening and diagnostic
- Compensation – there are some discrepancies in the HSA compensation that may impact mammography as a choice and discrepancies between screening and diagnostic
- Recruitment of techs from other countries – a high level of training is needed and there are a limited number of training spots available – foreign techs cannot certify for mammography only
- Private community clinics lose techs to hospitals (better benefits/retirement/RSP)
- Number of MRTs trained overall and available to all specialties

Recruiting and retaining technologists in breast imaging – challenges and ways to overcome

- Training seats – not enough (nine applicants for every BCIT seat); challenge finding student placements
- College prerequisites (e.g. grade 12 Physics) can be a barrier for mature students to enter the program, but mature graduates are a benefit to us, so can we change them?

The Provincial Breast Health Strategy

Working together to improve breast cancer prevention, screening & diagnosis in BC

- Marketing the specialty – need to legitimize breast imaging as a specialty to appeal to students who find appeal in MR and CT (more interesting and cutting edge technology)
- Cross training - need to train more mammographers in breast ultrasound, but there is cultural resistance from sonographers re cross training.
- Need to recognize the gender factor – job sharing is an attractive option for some employees.
- Technology - new models of equipment (digital) are helping to reduce RSI injuries (better ergonomics) to which mammography techs are prone