

Mobile Mammography

Establishing an Effective Mobile
Mammography Program

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Driving Breast Health

Hospitals and healthcare systems are looking for ways to overcome the barriers to breast cancer screenings, and one such way is mobile mammography. It is one of the fastest growing methods for reaching those in underserved and/or uninsured populations.

Mobile mammography provides less time consuming and more convenient access to breast screening, reducing breast cancer mortality among women.^{1,2}

To help mitigate risk, it is critical that your mobile mammography program is established in a way that results in enough volume to make it financially sustainable. Finding and maintaining strong community partnerships, having appropriate equipment and infrastructure in place and having a dedicated team with an efficient workflow are key elements to establishing an effective mobile mammography program.



Community and Employer Partnerships

The success of a mobile mammography program depends on the ability to attract large numbers of women for screening and the ability to conduct the program in a cost-effective manner. One way to extend the reach of the program is to partner with community-based organizations.

Studies show that offering on-site mammography at community-based sites where women gather is an effective method for increasing breast cancer screening rates among underscreened women.³

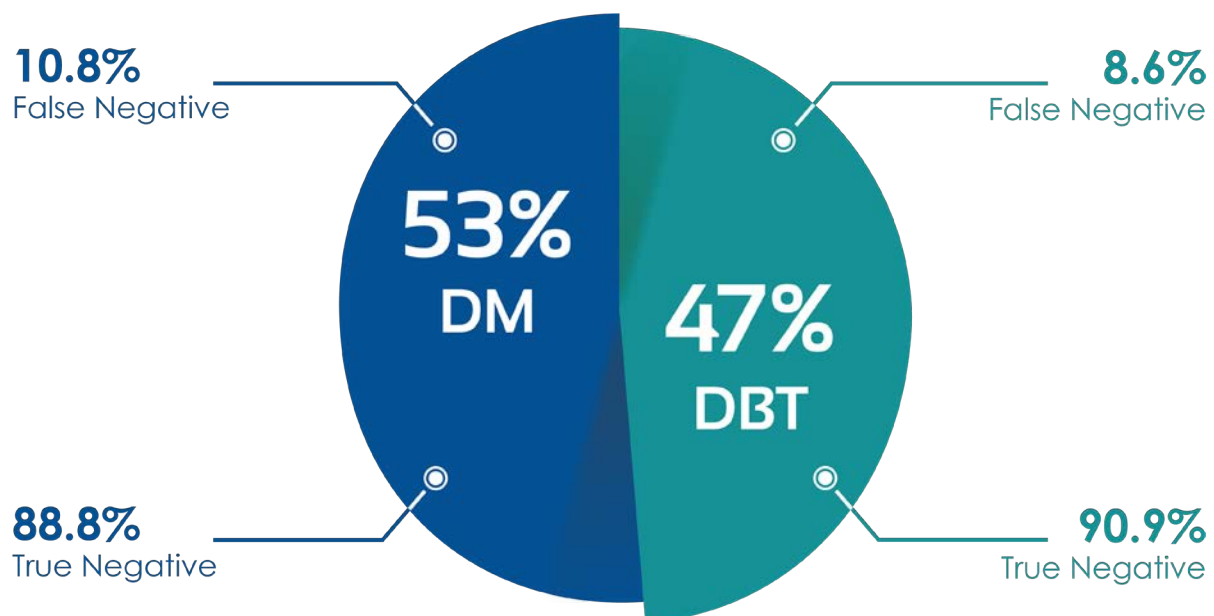
A study of 1,117 women, aged 50-80 from 45 Los Angeles County churches found that over 53% of the women would utilize a mobile mammography coach for breast screening at church.⁴

Employer intervention programs are another way to increase volume within the community. As suggested in the CDC Manual of Intervention Strategies to Increase Mammography Rates, one method to facilitate success is to have a participation incentive put in place by inviting employees to schedule an appointment, ask for a nominal \$15 deposit to guarantee the appointment, and inform each woman that the \$15 will be refunded when she appears for her mammogram. The deposit is an incentive for the individual to show up for the appointment the day the mobile unit is on-site.⁵ Mobile mammography that is part of an employer partnership provides an opportunity to move into the retail space and serves as an alternative method for growth.

Appropriate Equipment and Infrastructure

An effective mobile mammography program requires housing coaches with the latest FDA-approved advanced technology, offering all the early detection advantages of digital breast tomosynthesis (DBT), also known as 3D mammography. There is growing evidence that screening women with DBT in addition to digital mammography (DM) leads to an increase in cancer detection and reduction in women recalled for additional imaging.⁶ Researchers from the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania analyzed 46,482 screening episodes, 53% of the women studied received DM and 47% received DBT. The results showed that DBT was a more effective screening method with a lower false positive rate of 8.6% vs. 10.8% and a higher true negative rate of 90.9% vs. 88.7%.⁷ 3D technology improves the ability of mammography to detect early breast cancers, and decreases the number of women “called back” for additional tests for findings that are not cancers.

Effectiveness of DBT vs. DM Breast Cancer Screening



Staffing and Efficient Workflow

Properly allocating your staff to ensure the most effective program is critical to the success of your mobile mammography program. Mobile facilities vary widely in their staffing practices and use different combinations of radiology technologists, clerks, nurses and other personnel.⁸ Each of the team members have specific responsibilities from administrative management to scheduling patient appointments to driving to and from the scheduled sites. Keep in mind that most mobile mammography clinics are not in use every day, so proper staffing is vital to avoid overtime. An article highlighting a Houston-based mobile mammography program showed that they operate 4-6 days a week with a typical day starting at 6:30 am and ending at 5:00 pm, seeing up to 20 patients per day.⁹

Mobile Mammography Schedule

Activity	Start Time	End Time	Duration (h)
Preparation to leave for site	6:30 am	6:40 am	0:10:00
Drive to Site	6:40am	7:15am	0:35:00
Parking at Site	7:15 am	7:30 am	0:15:00
Warmup of digital unit	7:30 am	8:30 am	1:00:00
Daily quality control testing	8:30 am	9:00 am	0:30:00
Patient care	9:00 am	12:30 pm	3:30:00
Lunch	12:30 am	1:00 pm	0:30:00
Patient care	1:00 pm	3:50 pm	2:50:00
Preparation to leave site	3:50 pm	4:00 pm	0:10:00
Mobile coach return and shut down	4:00 pm	4:25 pm	0:25:00
Image upload	4:25 pm	5:00 pm	0:35:00
End of shift	5:00 pm		
TOTAL			10:30:00

Every mobile mammography program has different eligibility criteria and determining yours upfront will create more efficient workflow. That same Houston-based mammography program put the following eligibility criteria in place to lower costs and achieve faster throughput.

CHECKLIST

- Only screening mammography
- No walk-ins
- 35 years or older
- No breast problems
- No breast implants (requires additional images and time)
- Not pregnant
- Not breastfeeding
- 5 yrs post treatment (if history of breast cancer)

Conclusion

A strong mobile mammography program is an essential resource for women who need access to screening. They reduce many of the barriers by bringing breast cancer screening to the community. The primary goal of any mobile mammography program is to increase the number of women undergoing regular screening mammography. To do that effectively, you need to establish strong community and employer partnerships, house mobile coaches with high-end technology and staff appropriately to increase workflow and lower costs.



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References

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