

Building Business & Improving Patient Care

MammoPad and Digital Mammography

OREGON IMAGING CENTERS

In 2007, Oregon Imaging Centers, a five-campus imaging practice in the Eugene, Springfield and Albany areas of Oregon, was looking for a way to position itself as the breast health leader in its community. The state's number two ranking in the nation for highest breast cancer incidence also encouraged the facility to increase the public's willingness to follow screening mammography guidelines.

"The benefits we gained from MammoPad and digital mammography helped build this practice."

The solution to both problems came in the form of the Hologic MammoPad® breast cushion and Hologic Selenia® digital mammography. Oregon Imaging believed state-of-the-art equipment and the prospect of a softer mammogram could attract more women, particularly those who avoided mammography out of a fear of discomfort. Within one year, the center experienced double-digit volume growth, an influx of new patients and an increase in downstream revenue.



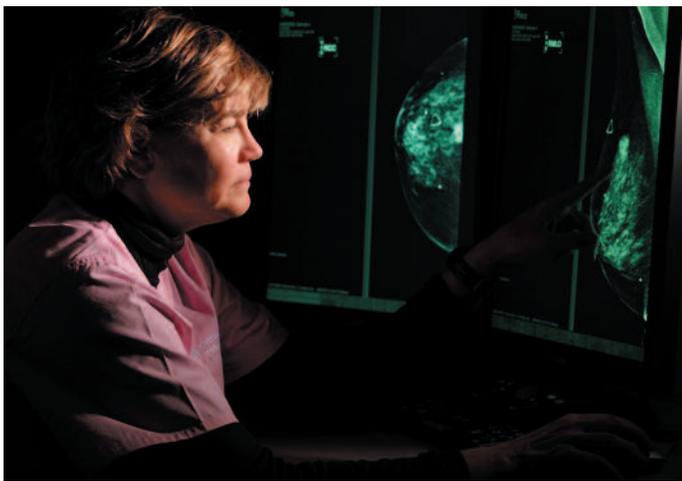
“The benefits we gained from MammoPad and Selenia digital mammography helped build this practice,” said director of business development Josh Kermisch.

MammoPad & FFDM Help Cushion the Centers’ Bottom Line

Oregon Imaging has always demonstrated a commitment to breast health. In addition to sub-specialized radiologists focused on breast imaging, the practice opened a new comprehensive breast center in December 2008. The Oregon Imaging Breast & MRI Center offers the convenience of all breast imaging modalities in one location, including screening and diagnostic mammography, core biopsy, ultrasound and MRI. It also shares space with an ambulatory surgery center and is located on the same campus as other specialties involved in breast cancer treatment, including medical oncology and plastic surgery.

The practice was eager to add MammoPad to its breast health services, despite concerns about cost. Kermisch suspected that with successful marketing, Oregon Imaging could offset the cost of MammoPad with an increase in patient volume, using MammoPad itself as a differentiator to attract more women.

“We felt that if MammoPad could increase the number of women choosing Oregon Imaging Centers for screening mammography, it would not only pay for itself but also yield additional profits for the practice,” Kermisch said.



The decision to introduce the MammoPad cushion and Selenia digital mammography systems produced both clinical and financial success.

In May 2007, Oregon Imaging began using MammoPad, becoming the only certified Softer Mammogram Provider in the area. Oregon Imaging’s work was far from over, as they were already preparing for a transition of a different kind.

Just two months after implementing MammoPad, Oregon Imaging replaced its screen-film mammography equipment with Hologic Selenia digital mammography systems. Oregon Imaging now uses four Selenia systems at its three mammography locations, including a Selenia S screening-only unit. Just as with MammoPad, Oregon Imaging established itself as a leader in breast health by becoming the first practice in Eugene and Springfield to offer the new technology.

“Women clearly prefer mammograms with MammoPad.”

“It was primarily a quality issue,” said mammography supervisor Susan Llorente. “There was a lot of literature

pointing towards better image quality with digital, especially for younger women and women with dense breasts. Quite simply, digital was what we needed to provide the best possible care for our patients.”

Oregon Imaging chose the Hologic Selenia system for a variety of reasons. Following an evaluation, the radiologists favored the Selenia over other systems, and the larger detector and workstation compatibility appealed to the technologists. Ultimately, Hologic’s reputation as a leader in breast health convinced Oregon Imaging to partner with them for their digital mammography needs.

“We felt Hologic was the market leader for digital mammography, and we had very good experiences with them in the past,” Kermisch said. “I think the overriding factor is that Hologic really treated Oregon Imaging Centers as a partner, not just as a place to put a piece of their equipment.”

By going from three screen-film units to two digital machines at its main site, the practice realized a major benefit of digital mammography: the technology allowed them to accommodate more women with fewer machines. Digital significantly improved the technologists’ efficiency, reducing exam time to 15 minutes for screening exams and 20 minutes for diagnostic exams. The more efficient workflow increased the center’s capacity, allowing them to accommodate more women and improving access to its mammography services.

In the summer of 2007, Oregon Imaging began marketing the availability of digital mammography and the site's designation as "the softer mammogram" provider. The center built a marketing campaign based on the ideas of quality, comfort, convenience and expertise – a campaign that focused heavily on MammoPad and digital mammography.

Local media coverage played a major role in the marketing effort, earning the center significant media coverage on local TV and in the local paper. The coverage featured Oregon Imaging's radiologists and technologists educating women about breast health and mammography. Marketing to referring physicians and speaking at local organization meetings rounded out the center's mission to brand itself as the place to go for quality mammograms.

"We really took this as an opportunity to educate the community about the importance of mammography and what's different about our practice. We always featured MammoPad and digital mammography in the overall message of comprehensive breast health," Kermisch said.

The Oregon Imaging Patient Experience

Within a year after implementing MammoPad and digital mammography, Oregon Imaging achieved its goals – and then some. From July 2007 to June 2008, patient volume increased by 22 percent over the same period from the prior year. With higher screening volumes, Oregon Imaging also noticed increases in additional imaging and diagnostic procedures, such as MRI, ultrasound and biopsy. The most rapid volume increase occurred the first five months following the installation of MammoPad and Selenia, corresponding with Oregon Imaging's heaviest marketing activity.

"We were skeptical at first – it's one thing when a manufacturer tells you their product will improve your business," Kermisch said. "But as soon as we analyzed the data to see how much our business had actually grown, that convinced us that both MammoPad and digital were good choices."



The Center found women clearly prefer mammograms with the MammoPad cushion.

However, Oregon Imaging is enjoying more than just fiscal benefits as a result. With the combination of digital mammography and MammoPad, the center found a profitable way to improve the mammography experience for patients and technologists alike.

"Women clearly prefer mammograms with MammoPad. I've personally had patients tell me how much of a difference it makes," said Kermisch. "Women tell me we're saving their lives by offering the softer mammogram, because they were convinced it was too painful and avoided getting mammograms until now."

"Women say we're saving their lives by offering MammoPad – they were convinced it was too painful and avoided mammograms until now."

With digital, patients not only enjoy the shorter exam times, but also appreciate not waiting for film to develop and knowing they're finished as soon as they leave the exam room.

For technologists, both technologies improved their relationships with patients.

Digital mammography enables them to offer the latest state-of-the-art technology, and MammoPad demonstrates their concern for patients' comfort.

"MammoPad changes the patient's attitude about having a mammogram – they're appreciative we provide this for them. It improves the patient-technologist relationship tremendously, which has significantly improved the morale of our technologists," Llorente said.

Perhaps most importantly, digital and MammoPad helped improve the quality of mammograms at Oregon Imaging. The added warmth of MammoPad prevents women from tightening their muscles and backing away from the machine. As a result, the technologists are able to achieve better positioning and increase tissue acquisition, particularly on the chest wall. Digital mammography significantly improves the image quality of the exams, especially for dense breasts.

“We really feel we’ve gotten significant benefit from both digital mammography and MammoPad,” Kermisch said, adding that both patients and staff appreciate the MammoPad recycling program – not surprising in a town known as one of the “Greenest Cities in America.”

“Hologic helped us build a business plan that turned out to be very successful.”



The staff at Oregon Imaging ultimately chose Hologic as their women's imaging vendor because the company treated them as a partner and not just another place to put their equipment.

Oregon Imaging & Hologic: A Partnership

For Oregon Imaging, the decision to implement the MammoPad breast cushion and Selenia digital mammography produced both clinical and financial success. The practice attributes part of that success to its ongoing relationship with Hologic, which has become an integral part of business for Oregon Imaging.

“Hologic has been a really important part of making this transition. Everyone from the technologists to the patient advocates to the radiologists needed training to understand how MammoPad and digital were going to impact our patients and our business,” Kermisch said. “Hologic helped us build a business plan that turned out to be very successful.

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