



THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

1200 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

HEALTH AFFAIRS

The Honorable Cindy Hyde-Smith
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

NOV 21 2019

Dear Senator Hyde-Smith:

Thank you for your inquiry of September 30, 2019, regarding TRICARE's coverage of Digital Breast Tomosynthesis (DBT), also called "3D mammography" for breast cancer screening. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to address your concerns.

I am pleased to report that I recently approved adding DBT for screening purposes to the TRICARE benefit under TRICARE's provisional coverage authority, which can allow coverage for emerging healthcare services and supplies. This coverage will be effective for services rendered on or after January 1, 2020, and the Defense Health Agency is working to ensure full implementation in early 2020. Since the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) does not currently recommend DBT for breast cancer screening, I could only approve provisional coverage at this time. This provisional coverage can be extended for up to five years, during which time we are hopeful that the USPSTF will recommend DBT for breast cancer screenings.

By federal regulation, TRICARE follows the USPSTF recommendations for coverage of preventive and screening procedures. However, we recognize that DBT is rapidly becoming the standard of care across the U.S. TRICARE has received many requests to include DBT screenings in our coverage. As a result of the evolving role of this technology in the health care field, we have taken steps to evaluate and amend our coverage.

TRICARE already added coverage of DBT this past August for diagnostic purposes when a physician finds it necessary (for example, if a patient presents with symptoms). Patients and providers should contact the appropriate Managed Care Support Contractor in their region for more information, at www.tricare.mil/contactus.

Thank you for your interest in the health and well-being of our Service members, veterans, and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom McCaffery", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Thomas P. McCaffery