What you should know about breast density

Effective January 1, 2014, every health care facility in Hawai`i that performs mammography examinations will need to provide a report and notification* to each patient that has dense breast tissue.

Why is breast density important?
Dense breast tissue makes it harder for doctors to see masses or tumors on mammograms, which can impact the accuracy of mammograms in detecting breast cancer.

What should you do if you have dense breast tissue?
Patients should talk with their physicians about what it means for them if their mammogram report says they have dense breast tissue. The discussion will revolve around risk factors for breast cancer and the benefits and risks of pursuing additional screenings.

*The notification will include the following mandatory language:
Your mammogram shows that your breast tissue is dense. Dense breast tissue is very common and is not abnormal. However, dense breast tissue can make it harder to find cancer on a mammogram and may also be associated with an increased risk of breast cancer.

This information about the result of your mammogram is given to you to raise your awareness. Use this information to talk to your physician as to whether, based on your risk, more screening tests might be useful. A report of your results was sent to your physician.

For more information about breast density, please consult with your physician.