

## FACTORS RELATED TO BREAST HEALTH AND BREAST CANCER SCREENING

### A. Breast Cancer Screening Frequency

To increase the likelihood of early detection of breast cancer, the American Cancer Society recommends that women age 40+ have a clinical breast exam and mammogram annually and perform a breast self-exam monthly.

- A majority of women in North Carolina self-report having a mammogram in the past two years; the overall percentage increased steadily between 1990 and 2002, but it varies according to some demographic factors (see Table 6 and Figure 7).
- **Women age 40 to 49 report the lowest rate of mammograms (70.8%)**
- Women age 60 to 64 have the highest rate of mammograms (higher than women age 65+ who are covered by Medicare); this is also the age at which many breast cancer diagnoses occur.
- White women and black women report similar rates of mammograms.
- Income and educational data show clear patterns: **women with higher incomes are more likely to report receiving mammograms than women with lower incomes, and women with higher levels of education are more likely to get a mammogram than women with less than a high school education.**

*Observations:* BCCCP funding for screening women ages 40 to 49 is very limited, so any outreach programs will need to address **access to screening**. Educational and outreach programs need to **target low-income and low-education populations** to increase awareness of and access to screening.

### B. Health Insurance Status

The American Cancer Society reports that women with breast cancer who lack health insurance are more likely to be diagnosed at a later stage and have a lower 5-year survival rate. Uninsured women may be less likely to have regular mammograms for earlier cancer detection because they must self-pay or find a funding source and because they do not benefit from regular screening reminders that insurance companies often send to their clients.

- Health insurance status and type of coverage in North Carolina is similar to the US as a whole (see Table 7 and Table 8).
- As of 2004, **17% of North Carolina residents were uninsured.**
- Between 2000 and 2004, the number of people in North Carolina with employer-sponsored insurance decreased by over 100,000 and **over 200,000 people became uninsured.**

*Observations:* As the number of uninsured women increases, the need for short-term and long-term solutions becomes more pressing. **Funds are needed immediately to screen women who cannot pay for preventive services, such as mammograms.**

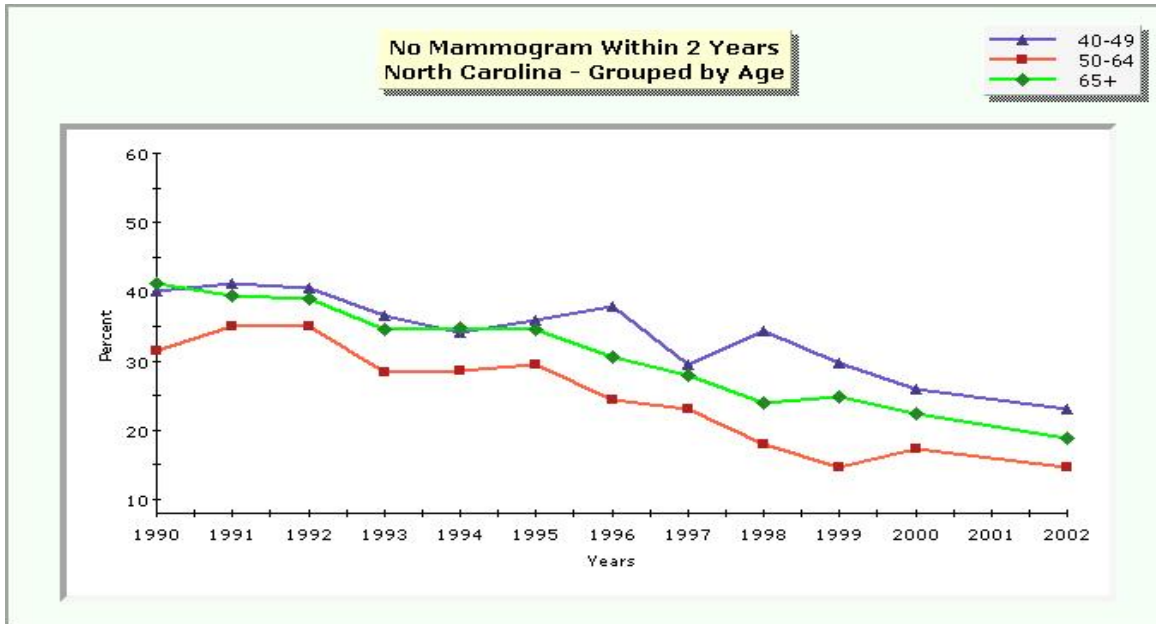
**Table 6:** Women age 40+ in North Carolina who have had a mammogram within the past two years

		<b>YES (%)</b>	<b>NO (%)</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		77.4	22.5
<b>AGE</b>	40 – 49	<b>70.8</b>	29.1
	50 – 59	80.6	19.3
	60 – 64	85.0	14.9
	65+	79.0	20.9
<b>RACE/ETHNICITY</b>	White	78.0	21.9
	Black	79.3	20.6
	Hispanic	-	-
	Other	-	-
	Multi-Racial	-	-
<b>INCOME</b>	Less than \$15,000	<b>66.9</b>	33.0
	\$15,000 – 24,999	<b>69.3</b>	30.6
	\$25,000 – 34,999	74.7	25.2
	\$35,000 – 49,999	80.1	19.8
	\$50,000+	85.1	14.8
<b>EDUCATION</b>	Less than H.S.	<b>68.0</b>	31.9
	H.S. or G.E.D	<b>74.0</b>	25.9
	Some post-H.S.	78.9	21.0
	College graduate	85.4	14.5

SOURCE

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2004. Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Retrieved from [www.cdc.gov/brfss](http://www.cdc.gov/brfss).

**Figure 7:** Women age 40+ in NC who have NOT had a mammogram in the past two years (by age)



**Table 7:** Health insurance status in North Carolina and the United States (total population)

TYPE OF COVERAGE	NC		US	
	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)
Employer	4,294,280	52	155,778,670	54
Individual	406,440	5	13,968,130	5
Medicaid	1,010,380	12	37,242,750	13
Medicare	996,450	12	34,379,930	12
Other Public	195,390	2	3,096,400	1
Uninsured	<b>1,372,610</b>	17	45,820,480	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,275,550</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>290,286,350</b>	<b>100</b>

SOURCE

Kaiser Family Foundation. 2004. Retrieved from <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>.

**Table 8:** Change in health insurance status 2000–2004 for non-elderly adults in North Carolina and the United States

TYPE OF COVERAGE	NC (#)	US (#)
Employer-sponsored	- 117,750	- 2,769,114
Individual	+ 55,925	+ 812,339
Medicaid	+ 118,687	+ 3,158,858
Uninsured	<b>+ 202,119</b>	+ 6,323,096

SOURCE

Kaiser Family Foundation. 2000-2004. Retrieved from <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>.