
As the Director of Women’s Imaging at The Imaging Center of West Hartford and Buckland Hills Imaging in South Windsor, Jean Weigert has three main reasons why she insists on using computer-aided detection (CAD) when reading mammograms:

• CAD offers valuable assistance as “another set of eyes” when interpreting radiographic images. “I feel like I haven’t completed reading a mammo unless I’ve used CAD.”

• Patients nowadays are savvy and informed enough to expect state-of-the-art care. “To call yourself an office of excellence, you must use the best tools available — and CAD is the standard tool for early detection.”

• CAD offers a good return on investment due to reimbursement from Medicare and private insurers. “The bottom line is important in everyone’s practice,” says Dr. Weigert. “With SecondLook Digital CAD for Fujifilm FFDM [full-field digital mammography], we continue to get a lot of bang for our buck.”

Going Digital to Stay Competitive

The two Connecticut radiology practices where Dr. Weigert reads mammograms decided to transition from analog to digital after the ACRIN DMIST study was published in 2005. “Based on the study, my colleagues and I hoped digital mammography would help improve our interpretation,” says Dr. Weigert, “Additionally, we felt it was important to offer advanced imaging technology.”

As part of this conversion, integrating SecondLook Digital CAD with Fujifilm full-field digital mammography seemed natural, given how much Dr. Weigert and her colleagues had come to rely on CAD with analog mammography. “We wouldn’t have considered going digital without CAD,” says Dr. Weigert.
The Benefits of SecondLook for Fujifilm FFDM

The addition of the Fujifilm FFDM system allowed the growing Connecticut practices to become more efficient. “It takes less time to process cases without having to deal with the dark room necessary for analog films,” reports Joyce Urban, Practice Manager working with Dr. Weigert. “Now we can send the digital images to the doctor’s office much faster.”

The SecondLook Digital CAD component of the conversion has allowed the practice to maintain state-of-the-art mammography. CAD prompts both new and experienced radiologists to take another look at mammogram findings that may not initially have seemed significant. According to Dr. Weigert, “We’re all very busy — and it’s scary to think about what you could miss if you get sidetracked or distracted while reading — but CAD helps a radiologist slow down and re-focus.”

The particular combination of CAD and Fujifilm FFDM has been a winning one for the practices. “Digital softcopy offers more information”, explains Dr. Weigert, “which makes the addition of CAD even more valuable when sorting out clusters, subtle masses and complex findings. The quality of information you have in front of you to penetrate dense breasts is eye-opening.”

A Successful Digital Conversion

As hoped, the conversion to Fujifilm FFDM with SecondLook Digital CAD has helped improve the radiologists’ overall mammography interpretation. “Now that we’re on soft copy it’s so easy to click a button and view the case with and without CAD,” says Dr. Weigert. “It is part of our routine interpretation and a very good addition to the practice’s general standard of care.”

Despite a tight budget, the financial case for adding CAD has been compelling for this practice. “We have obvious budget constraints in our office—everybody does—we’re a small office,” says Dr. Weigert. However, the more economical pricing of the Fujifilm FFDM equipment and the additional reimbursement for both digital mammography and CAD from Medicare and private insurers has offset the costs of converting to digital.

More importantly, Dr. Weigert and her colleagues are proud to be able to prioritize state-of-the-art early detection in mammography with iCAD SecondLook and Fujifilm FFDM for the right reasons—or as she puts it: “Because the patients’ peace of mind is as important as our diagnostic confidence.”