In 2016, 246,660 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed among women, and approximately 40,450 women are expected to die from the disease. Breast cancer typically produces no symptoms when the tumor is small and most treatable. Therefore, it is important for women to follow recommended screening guidelines to detect breast cancer at an early stage.

Mammography will detect most breast cancer in women though sensitivity is lower for women with dense breasts. Dense breast tissue makes it harder for doctors to detect cancer on mammograms. This is because dense breast tissue and breast masses or tumors both show up white on the scans, so the dense tissue can mask tumors. Given the limitations of mammography to detect breast cancer in dense breasts, it is important to provide women with information about the risks of breast density and to support studies that address the gaps in knowledge around breast density.

**ACS CAN Supports The Breast Density and Mammography Reporting Act**

The **Breast Density and Mammography Reporting Act of 2015** (S. 370/H.R. 716), introduced by Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) and Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) and Representatives Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), Michael Fitzpatrick (R-PA), and Steve Israel (D-NY), will help women and their doctors make more informed decisions. The Act directs an evidence-based process to inform women of the facts about breast density and risk, and recommends that women who are found to have dense breast tissue have a follow-up conversation about next steps directly with their doctors. Specifically the bill would:

- Require the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services to undertake an evidence-based process, to include a review of current scientific knowledge, technological advances and guidance from medical experts, in order to develop the specific language regarding dense breast tissue for mammography written reports, which are given to women who have been screened;
- Create a national standard for the written report language, making it easier for doctors to establish best practices for communicating with patients;
- Encourage new research to support the creation of clinical guidelines and best practices for screening of and reporting to women with dense breasts.