

## **Breast Screening Leadership Group & Course**

By: Debra Monticciolo, MD, FACR, FSBI

Breast cancer screening with mammography significantly decreases mortality from breast cancer. The scientific evidence for this is overwhelming. Population based studies show a 40% reduction in mortality for women age 40 and older who participate in mammography programs. In spite of this, there is continual national debate about the utility of mammography. Several national leaders in breast imaging have been on the front lines of this war against mammography for decades. A key figure in this process is Dan Kopans, MD, Professor of Radiology at Harvard University and current Chair of Fellows of the SBI. Dr. Kopans recognized that he and other leaders have critical knowledge and presentation strategies that will be lost if not transferred in an organized way to a new generation of leaders.

In early 2014, Dan brought his concern to Barbara Monsees, MD, who at the time was Chair of the American College of Radiology (ACR) Commission on Breast Imaging and who also served on the SBI Board for many years. At the final ACR National Conference on Breast Cancer in Spring of 2014, Barbara, Geraldine McGinty, MD (Chair of the ACR Economics Commission), and Debra Monticciolo, MD (Chair of the ACR Quality and Safety Commission and Education Chair for the Breast Commission) discussed this educational challenge and the Breast Screening Leadership Group idea began. The concept was fairly simple: to train new leaders in screening. Our goal was to ensure that future breast imaging leaders have the knowledge and tools to understand breast cancer screening and defend it with solid science. We decided to hold an extensive educational training course via webinars, given by the leaders in breast cancer screening today.

Initially this was an ACR project. Pam Wilcox, RN, MBA, ACR Executive Vice-President was at the ACR NCBC and supported the concept. We needed approval from the ACR Executive Director, Bill Thorwarth, MD, and we needed to have the project align with the ACR strategic plan. Pam was instrumental in making that happen. Once the concept was solidified (outlined below), we contacted Murray Rebner, MD, then President of the SBI, and Yasmeeen Fields, CAE, Executive Director of the SBI to gauge their interest. They enthusiastically joined us in planning the first course.

Dan Kopans and Barbara Monsees designed the first curriculum, which was then edited by Geraldine, Debra, and many of the faculty. For the faculty, we asked the best of our leaders to volunteer their time and expertise, which all did without hesitation. Their commitment, dedication, and patience throughout the course cannot be overstated. We are grateful to the following teachers who donated their efforts so unselfishly: Shawn Farley (ACR Public Relations), Mark Helvie, MD, Edward Hendrick, PhD, Daniel Kopans, MD, Carol Lee, MD, Geraldine McGinty, MD, Edward Sickles, MD, and Robert Smith, PhD (American Cancer

Society). The course topics covered screening basics, randomized control trial (RCT) analysis, other non-RCT types of evidence, methods for evaluating the scientific literature, modeling, harms and benefits of screening other than mortality reduction, economics of breast imaging, outcomes measures, and how to present information to the public and press. These topics were presented in nine evening webinars. Each webinar was 30-40 minutes with the remainder of the hour left for questions. A final face-to-face media training session was held at the SBI 2015 national meeting in Orlando.

We wanted the course to be challenging yet accessible to the trainees, so we kept the teacher-to-student ratio low. Twenty-one individuals were invited to the training; 19 accepted and completed the course. All participants were required to commit to attending all nine webinars and the face-to-face meeting and all needed a letter of support from their department Chair. We also asked that they commit to future service in the breast imaging community. All agreed.

This was not a passive educational exercise. We wanted the participants to have a sense of commitment and to produce tangible results. Participants read seminal articles for each webinar and discussed them during the sessions. Faculty made themselves available at any time for inquiries about all aspects of screening. Questions and writing exercises were submitted to the learners as the course progressed and the results were made available to both teachers and participants. Several educational deliverables were also outlined. The SBI newsletter articles that will follow this introduction to our leadership course are part of that concept.

We hope that our faculty have inspired a new generation of breast imagers to take leading roles in breast cancer screening education nationally. All showed great enthusiasm and tenacity during the training, to which all committed a great deal of time and effort. Congratulations to all of the participants: Drs. Kate Appleton, Elizabeth Arleo, Jay Baker, Lora Barke, Wendy DeMartini, Peter Eby, Amy Fowler, Phoebe Freer, Sarah (Sally) Friedewald, Bonnie Joe, Jessica Leung, Linda Moy, Bethany Niell, Mary (Mimi) Newell, Brett Parkinson, Elissa Price, Jocelyn Rapelyea, Dana Smetherman, and Janice Sung.

Note: The planners, speakers and participants would like to thank Tiffany Lipp for her assistance in making this course possible.