[Insert Date]

Dear [insert name],

I am writing to you today to request your consideration of breast density notification practices for our provincial breast screening program. Our provincial cancer agency states it is committed to early detection of breast cancer and yet breast density information, which can help with early detection, is not provided to all family doctors and patients. Women need to be informed of their breast density because if they have dense breasts they face numerous risks and they can be proactive in facing these risks. Breast density matters.

**Breast Density Risks**

1. Cancer is 4-6 times more likely in women with the densest breasts.

2. In women with dense breasts, mammograms are less accurate and will miss more than 50% of the cancers present because dense breast tissue shows up as white on a mammogram and so does cancer.

3. In women with dense breasts, often by the time cancers are discovered, they are later stage. Survival is affected by a late or missed diagnosis due to dense breasts.

4. A large study has just been published and concluded that breast density is the most significant of all the common risk factors for the development of breast cancer.

**Accessing Breast Density Information**

The reporting protocol used by radiologists in our province is such that it is impossible for ALL women to find out if they have dense breasts, even if they fill out a Consent to Disclose Personal Health Information. Radiologists tick off a box stating the density is under, equal or over 75%. This means that women under 75% breast density cannot find out if they are in the 50-75% category, even though dense breasts refer to 50% and above dense tissue. If a woman is assessed as under 75% breast density, she cannot know her breast density category. It is not reasonable that ALL women cannot find out their breast density.

I believe that with density notification and informed discussions between women and their doctors, early detection can be a reality for women with dense breasts. **If women knew they had dense breasts, they could have the chance to protect themselves from harm by:**

* being vigilant practicing breast self-examination between screenings
* optimizing lifestyle risk factors (exercise, weight, alcohol use, etc.)
* understanding that a normal mammogram does not mean cancer is not present
* seeking supplementary screening, such as ultrasound

I urge you to mandate density notification to family doctors and women. In this way, you can ensure the commitment of this province to finding breast cancer early and saving lives. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Kind Regards,

[Insert Name]

[Insert city and province]