

Smithtown Messenger  
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## We Need Mammograms...

A recent Danish study, published in *Lancet*, questioned the effectiveness of mammograms to save women's lives. Overwhelmingly,

the U.S. medical community refuted those findings.

Following the brouhahas that the study incited, Fran Visco, the founder and President of the National Breast Cancer Coalition, testified before Congress that women should consider both the pros and cons of mammograms before getting what the American Cancer Society has recommended be a yearly screening. We take issue

Along with yearly clinical exams performed by a doctor, and self-breast examinations which are particularly valuable for women in their 20s and 30s, mammograms have proven, time and again, to be an important component of breast health, especially for women in their 40s, 50s, 60s, and beyond. A baseline mammogram at age 35 or 40, depending on family history, can often prove crucial in detecting changes in the breast that alert clinicians to the presence of cancer.

Until a cure for breast cancer is found, the most effective way of finding and treating the disease is through early detection. Advances in technology, including digital mammograms and M.R.I. scans, have improved detection, and the promise of a blood test promises even better detection.

At this point, mammograms remain the most effective means of detecting breast cancer at its earliest stages. Women should not be fooled, either by "authoritative" voices from advocacy groups like Ms. Visco, or by relying too much on "the study of the week."

**Fran Kritchek, Lorraine Pace  
Geri Barish Breast Cancer  
Survivors and Activists**

**W**e welcome letters and opinions! Please send them to Phillip Sciarillo, Editor-in-Chief, P.O. Box 925, 127 East Main Street, Smithtown, New York 11787 or e-mail at [messenger127@aol.com](mailto:messenger127@aol.com).

Letters must be no more than 500 words and may be edited for length and clarity.

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with this advice, which serves only to confuse women and possibly prevent them from getting a simple test that might save their lives.