



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **LIVINGSTON HEALTHCARE ADDS DIGITAL MAMMOGRAPHY**

Livingston HealthCare announced today that digital mammography services will soon be available locally. Delivery of the equipment to Livingston Memorial Hospital is scheduled for mid-April and digital mammograms will be available beginning May 11.

“We are very pleased to be able to offer this technology to the community,” said Livingston HealthCare CEO Sam Pleshar. “Digital mammography is quickly becoming the standard of care across the country. It is very important to us to be offering the highest quality service available to our patients.”

The same digital technology that has created a revolution in the camera industry is driving the change in mammogram imaging. Digital imaging improves the quality of medical imaging—which improves the quality of patient diagnoses. “Digital mammograms have clear, high-definition images that make tissue abnormalities easier to see,” said Dr. Denise Helin, OB/GYN at Livingston HealthCare. “Digital mammograms also mean a faster exam time, fewer repeat exams, more detailed images, and improved detection for women under 50 and women with dense breast tissue.”

Mammograms are a critical screening tool for breast cancer, where survival is so highly dependent on early diagnosis. The American Cancer Society recommends that women 40 and over have a screening mammogram every year. The procedure is covered by most insurance companies. For women without insurance coverage, the Montana Breast and Cervical Health Program provides funding for annual mammograms.

“Mammograms cannot detect all cancers,” added Dr. Helin. “But they are an essential screening tool—particularly when used in conjunction with a clinical breast exam, performed by your healthcare provider, and a monthly self exam.”

According to the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, breast cancer is the most common cancer among Montana women with more than two times the incidence of the next two most prevalent cancers combined. While breast cancer-related deaths have decreased, the occurrence of breast cancer more than doubled in Montana between 1979 and 2003.

Digital mammography is an important step in converting all Livingston HealthCare imaging services to digital, which consistently generates quality images with good contrast resolution and image sharpness. In addition to MRI and CT-SCAN which are already digital, Livingston HealthCare will add computed radiography, or “digital x-rays” and PACS, which is a picture archiving communication system that allows the images to be stored as a part of the patient’s electronic medical record. The digital equipment is considerably more expensive. Digital mammography, together with the other new digital components is estimated to cost nearly \$900,000. The organization has applied for several grants to help fund the conversion. Livingston HealthCare also projects cost savings with the new equipment, which includes staff efficiency, since they do not need to print film images, and an estimated \$20,000 savings annually eliminating chemicals and printing costs.

To schedule an appointment for the new digital mammogram, talk to your healthcare provider.

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