

Senate Passes Mensch Bill to Improve Breast Cancer Detection

June 18, 2013

Harrisburg – The state Senate today approved legislation sponsored by Sen. Rob Mensch to improve the early detection of breast cancer.

Senate Bill 358 will require facilities offering mammograms to provide patients with the notification of breast density.

“Dense breast tissue is a relatively common condition, but it can hide abnormalities and complicate early detection of breast cancer,” said Mensch. “Notification will allow women to know their own breast density. With that information, they can talk to their doctor about what their breast density rating means and whether they are at a higher risk for breast cancer. That’s a discussion that should happen, and this bill ensures that women will have the information in hand to have that discussion.”

There were more than 232,000 new cases of breast cancer among women reported in the U.S. this year, with nearly 40,000 deaths. Women who have extremely dense breast tissue are at a four-to-six-times greater risk of developing breast cancer.

“According to a recent poll, about 40 percent of women who get mammograms have dense breast tissue, but almost 95 percent of women are unaware of their own breast density,” Mensch said. “Without an established protocol of informing women, most are unaware of their breast density even after a mammogram. Better communication and better screening can save lives.”

Senate Bill 358 is supported by the Pennsylvania Breast Cancer Coalition. It will be sent to the House of Representatives for consideration.