

## AAT Position Paper on Thermography

On November 29, 2012 Health Canada authored a letter to the Canadian Chiropractic Association which states, “Thermography machines are not authorized to screen for breast cancer.” It states, in essence, “Clinics should not be promoting or using thermography machines to screen for breast cancer.”

This letter followed a broadcast on the CBC News. This broadcast suggested misrepresentation of the value of thermography. The Board of the American Academy of Thermology had previously been in discussion about the need for AAT to provide a voice to the public on thermal imaging related issues and thought this represented such an opportunity. To that end the AAT has developed the following position statement for public dissemination. In addition to being published in the AAT Newsletter it will be posted on the AAT website.

The American Academy of Thermology’s position on breast thermography is that it represents a **breast health risk assessment tool**. We do not now and have never supported the notion that breast thermography is a diagnostic test for breast cancer. While we understand that there are certain individuals who have made this claim in Canada and in other countries, we are directly opposed to that position.

Historically the Food and Drug Administration approved medical thermography as an adjunctive test for breast cancer screening in 1982 (these were the words of the FDA, not ours). It is not our intent to compare thermography with mammography, ultrasound, MRI, or any other diagnostic test. We believe that valuable information can be garnered from thermography of the breast. Breast thermography is a physiologic test that offers individuals and healthcare practitioners insight which permits for a proactive approach to breast health on important issues including hormone imbalance, angiogenesis, lymphatic congestion, and other soft tissue abnormalities associated with breast health. Breast thermal imaging provides this information from a noninvasive format which does not expose the individual to radiation or compression.

In conclusion, we support the use of thermography as a breast health risk assessment tool. While much of the information garnered in a Breast Thermographic examination does address risk factors that may be associated with changes in breast health, thermographic imaging in and of itself is not a competitor to or replacement for any other diagnostic test. We do not see Breast Thermography as a stand-alone or a “diagnostic test” for breast cancer. The AAT supports those individuals in Canada and worldwide who share our position and hope that this information will enlighten others who see the purpose of thermography differently.

Approved by the American Academy of Thermology  
March 17, 2013