



## St. Luke's Offers First One-Stop Clinic™ For Breast In The Nation

The network partnered with GE Healthcare and PINC AI™ Applied Sciences to offer a rapid diagnosis and treatment option for breast cancer

The network partnered with GE Healthcare and PINC AI™ Applied Sciences to offer a rapid diagnosis and treatment option for breast cancer. St. Luke's University Health Network has implemented the first One-Stop Clinic™ in the United States—serving as a national model to help accelerate breast cancer care through a multi-modality approach. The One-Stop Clinic for Breast model, which originated at the Gustave Roussy Cancer Center in France, has been shown to improve clinical workflow and speed up breast cancer diagnosis and treatment planning.

The St. Luke's Regional Breast Center is located in Center Valley, Pennsylvania, and employs a staff of 20 breast imaging professionals who serve the entire region. To date, nearly 800 patients have benefited from this rapid diagnostic approach that lessens the average waiting time for a diagnosis from a national average of 26 days to just three to seven days.

Dr. Karl Yaeger, radiologist and Division Chief of Women's Imaging at St. Luke's University Health Network, said the partnership with GE Healthcare and PINC AI™ Applied Sciences represents “a paradigm shift in the way we deliver breast care” in the area.

St. Luke's Network Director of Women's Imaging Michele Brands said, “Our number one guiding light for this program is to reduce the time patients wait for results and to reduce their anxiety around the entire process. Ideally, my dream goal is to have no woman wait for results over a weekend, when you can really allow yourself to get anxious.”

With this model, she said, a woman presenting with concerning breast symptoms—such as a lump, breast pain, or

nipple discharge—will be “scaffolded with care. She meets with her breast nurse navigator, and we conduct all imaging and biopsy right on site.”

Patients are prepared for appointments in advance, greeted by their care team, and presented with the appointment plan. Typically, this includes a diagnostic mammogram—often contrast-enhanced—as well as a diagnostic ultrasound and, if needed, a biopsy. If a biopsy is performed, pathology results are shared with the patient within 48 hours. In cases where further intervention is warranted, the team assists in securing an appointment with a breast surgeon.

St. Luke's is also the first in the region to provide contrast-enhanced mammography, an imaging technique that uses iodinated intravenous (IV) contrast in combination with a digital mammogram. Yaeger said the dye acts to make any cancer growth stand out against background tissue. “It's highly accurate and it helps us to see very early on in the diagnostic process whether or not a patient has cancer, or if further testing is needed,” he said.

Brands said, “There are scenarios where we are able to determine right then and there that there is no problem, and we're able to let the patient know, ‘You are good!’”

The Regional Breast Center also addresses the hesitancy to get regular mammograms by employing GE Healthcare's Pristina Dueta™ device, which gives the patient the opportunity to play an active role in determining their level of breast compression with the help of a hand-held remote and a technologist's guidance. “It's been wonderful,” said Brands. “We've found that the patients almost always opt for more compression since it offers them some level of control.”

Yaeger and Brands agree that, as a result of COVID-19, many individuals have delayed diagnostic tests and regular screenings—such as mammograms—and both stress the importance of an annual test. “The earlier we can detect an issue,” Yaeger said, “the more options there are for successful treatment. This is particularly important if you have any worrying symptoms, such a lump you could feel, for example. So please, don't delay.”

Unfortunately, said Brands, “some people did put off routine tests during COVID-19, and we have seen that impact in a number of cases, which could have been caught earlier. Over the last five years or so, there has been a national conversation about the age a woman should start having mammograms, and how often. At St. Luke's, we strongly recommend an annual screening beginning at age 40.”

Brands credited a number of organizations with raising national awareness around breast cancer. “It's to the point where most women don't think *if* I get breast cancer, but *when*,” she said. “Most women are just waiting for that shoe to drop. What we hope to do is lessen all the anxiety around this whole process and encourage women to get their regular screenings. In Pennsylvania, it is a state law that an insurance plan must cover the annual screening mammogram. There's no reason not to get that annual exam. Our message remains, quite simply: Don't skip!”

**St Luke's**  
UNIVERSITY HEALTH NETWORK  
866-STLUKES (785-8537)