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A quick install and happy, comfortable patients: Lisa Quamme details her experience with Fujifilm's ASPIRE Cristalle Digital Mammography system

— [William Doss](#)

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Lisa Quamme

Breast cancer screening rates are consistently below targets set by the National Cancer Institute's Healthy People 2020 program. While participation rates are higher than other screening methods such as colonoscopy, the number of underinsured or uninsured patients receiving breast screening is staggeringly low, somewhere in the range of 30-38 percent.

Minneapolis, Minnesota's Northpoint Health and Wellness Center aims to boost these rates, through outreach programs and technology such as Fujifilm's ASPIRE Cristalle Digital Mammography system. Lisa Quamme, Northpoint's breast health coordinator and senior radiology technologist, spoke to Radiology Business about how the system has improved their mammography screening.

Can you tell me a little bit about Northpoint Health and Wellness Center? What services do you provide to patients?

Lisa Quamme: We are a multidisciplinary clinic and we offer a lot of services. We have a full dental clinic, medical clinic, eye clinic, behavioral health clinic, and a human services agency. The human services agency helps people in the community, doing a lot of outreach to bring people to the clinic for their preventative care. The population we serve is underinsured clientele, patients that are considered 200 percent below the poverty level—so we offer programs for free breast and cervical cancer screenings that operate on an income qualifier.

Most of the mammography we perform is unscheduled—we perform them the same day women see their providers. They are walk-in appointments, in a way. And that's one way the ASPIRE Cristalle is beneficial: Sometimes you can have seven or eight

women walk into the clinic and they all want their mammograms. We can have fast patient throughput and fast exposure times with the digital platform.

What's the biggest impact this new system has had on your facility?

The biggest patient impacts have been increased throughput and patient comfort. We did a limited survey with women who underwent breast screenings with the ASPIRE system, asking them to compare that mammogram with mammograms in the past using "more comfortable," "less comfortable," or "about the same." We just did a brief sampling, but about 76 percent of the women said it was "more comfortable" and the rest said "about the same."

Another benefit has been with the clarity of images themselves. Our chief mammography radiologist, from Hennepin County Medical Center, reads all mammograms and was very impressed with the sharp images.

Does that improved comfort increase a patient's willingness to get a mammogram?

Personally, I think it does. Women talk; they talk to their female family members, their female friends, and when they say, "I just got my mammogram done at Northpoint and it was so much better than the ones I've had in the past," I think that takes some of that fear away from the stories about mammograms being so painful.

I actually had a woman specifically comment she had never had a mammogram before, because of the stories about how painful it was. After the exam, I asked her how it went. She said, "oh it was so easy, it was nothing. I don't know what they're talking about." I do believe that's a direct reflection on Fujifilm's comfort paddle. We had a flex paddle on our old unit, but the old one didn't work like the paddle on the ASPIRE machine.

I've been doing mammography for almost 20 years and I've worked on a lot of imaging units, and the way that this paddle conforms to the breast to achieve even compression is what contributes to that comfort, making it less painful and more comfortable. It will make things more tolerable for the patient.

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Can you describe Fujifilm's customer service? How was the install?

I have to tell you, Fujifilm went above and beyond for us to get this unit installed! Normally, companies like to give two weeks for a full installation, but they actually did our installation in just one week.

The reason why they put so much extra effort into the installation was because we have a special event every October called, "See, Test, and Treat." We do free mammograms and pap smears over three days in October and our goal is to try and service 300 women over three days—it is pretty intense. If they did not get that unit installed in one week, we were not going to be able to offer mammograms.

Their service was phenomenal; they went above and beyond to make sure everything was working. We've worked with Fujifilm for quite a while and I get immediate responses from them all the time. I call tech support and they're immediately helping me. You always get a live person. They have some of the best customer support. I have my application specialist I can text or call if I have questions, and then for the actual servicing of the equipment, I have team members I have contact with as well.

Would you recommend this system to other facilities?

I would highly recommend it. I really would. It's very easy to use, the equipment looks nice and it produces beautiful images.