WELCOME DR. KOMISSAROVA

Please join us in welcoming Maria Komissarova, MD to our team of experienced radiologists. Dr. Komissarova relocated from Albany, NY and is excited to be living in an area with such a strong cultural heritage.

Dr. Komissarova completed her medical school training at the University of Michigan, where she continued training, both for her radiology residency and fellowship, in Abdominal Cross-Sectional Imaging. Dr. Komissarova is a board certified radiologist specializing in cross-sectional imaging, with an interest in Women’s Imaging.

In her spare time, Dr. Komissarova enjoys spending time with family and friends, visiting museums, going to the gym, watching live performances, and is delighted to meet new people and learn about various places and cultures.

Dr. Komissarova’s decision to become a physician was inspired by her interests in sciences, problem solving, and a desire to make a positive difference in the lives of others. In medical school, she saw that radiologists have a unique opportunity to combine medical knowledge with technology to arrive at a diagnosis that would explain patients’ symptoms, for earlier detection of disease, and to guide or evaluate response to therapy. She became interested in this fascinating field, which is both intellectually challenging and fulfilling and feels fortunate to be able to help others with radiology being a ubiquitous and crucial part of patient care. She finds the opportunity to interact with patients and clinicians greatly rewarding. Dr. Komissarova stated, “I am honored to be a part of the Windsong Radiology team, sharing its values, dedication to high quality patient care and serving the community.”

ANNUAL MAMMOGRAMS SAVE LIVES

With all of the confusion around breast cancer screening guidelines, it is not surprising that many of your patients still have questions about whether it is beneficial to have an annual mammogram. The most recent scientific research data affirms what many of us already knew. Mammograms are saving lives and annual mammograms for all women ages 40 and older are essential in that life-saving quest.

A new report from the National Cancer Institute states that breast cancer death rates have dropped by 40% since 1990. That equates to 274,000 lives saved, according to the American College of Radiology (ACR). The ACR states that, “Regular mammography screening and improved therapies are undoubtedly responsible for the decline in breast cancer deaths. The data shows that in 1990, 73.8 out of 100,000 women died of breast cancer, and in 2014 the number dropped to 45.9 out of 100,000.”

Increased use of digital breast tomosynthesis (3D mammography™) has improved screening capability. Researchers have found that the added sensitivity and specificity of 3D mammograms can also reduce the need for follow-up screenings, minimizing the stress and anxiety that women typically experience when they are recalled for additional imaging. All Windsong patients are offered 3D mammography™.

Our own retrospective study of all Windsong breast cancer patients diagnosed through screening exams in 2010 and 2014 evaluated how 3D mammography has impacted tumor detection regarding tumor size and imaging characteristics. The Windsong study revealed that 3D mammography™ is superior to digital mammography alone for breast cancer screening, as 3D mammography is able to detect smaller cancers and those with architectural distortion, which can be very difficult to see with regular mammography.

Anna Chen, M.D., Director of Women’s Imaging affirmed, “Breast cancer screening gives us the ability to detect cancer early. Early detection of cancer when it is most easily treated can help preserve quality of life.”
QUESTIONS ABOUT THE NEW YORK STATE BREAST CANCER SCREENING LEGISLATION

When did the breast law go into effect?

The new Breast Law went into effect January 1, 2017. However, patient's coverage under this new law is subject to their insurance policy anniversary date. (Example – if the policy runs Jan 1 – Jan 1, coverage took place starting Jan 1. If the policy runs Dec 1 – Dec 1, then the New Law coverage does not take effect until Dec 1, 2017.)

What does the new breast law cover?

The new breast law will cover Screening Mammo, Diagnostic Mammo, Tomosynthesis (screening/diagnostic), Breast Ultrasound (screening or diagnostic, unilateral or bilateral), and Breast MRI. The new law will not cover breast biopsies.

What insurances follow this new law?

The law is only a NYS Law, so it only applies to insurance plans administered in NYS, such as BCBS, IHA, Univera, Medicaid, and Fidelis. Federally administered plans such as Medicare, ANY Medicare managed care plan, United Health Care, Cigna, Aetna, Wellcare, Tricare are not held to this new law. The law also does not apply to self-funded plans. Below is a more detailed listing of insurances which fall under the new law.

What should a patient do if they are not sure if the new law applies to them?

Patients should contact our billing department at 716.631.2592 or call their insurance for more information.

What if the patient does not fall under the new law?

If the patient’s insurance does not fall under the new law, their screening mammogram is covered by their insurance at 100%. All other testing should be covered by their insurance but is subject to copay, co-insurance, or deductible. If patients have an HSA account, they can use this towards any bills they incur. They may also contact the Cancer Services Program in their county for possible help with out of pocket expenses prior to their services.

QUESTIONS ABOUT TOMOSYNTHESIS (3D MAMMOGRAPHY)

Who can have a tomosynthesis – 3D mammogram exam?

Windsong now offers 3D mammograms (standard mammogram and tomosynthesis) to all patients with no additional radiation exposure via C-View technology. Your patients do have the option to decline the tomosynthesis and have a standard mammogram.

Most insurance plans are now covering 3D mammogram exams. If the patient’s plan does not fall under the new breast law, the 3D mammogram exam (screening and diagnostic) is subject to co-pay, co-insurance, or deductible. The average out of pocket cost for the 3D mammogram exam is $50-$75, depending on the patient’s insurance plan.

Any questions? Contact anyone in the billing dept. at 716.631.2500, ext. 2592 or your patient can contact their insurance company.

CLARE BRADY, RPA, RRA/RT, CT

Windsong welcomes Clare Brady, who recently joined Windsong Radiology as a Radiology Practitioner Assistant. Prior to joining Windsong, Clare worked in the Electrophysiology Department at GVI Procedure Labs as a Cardiovascular Radiologic Technologist. Before that time she worked as a CT Technologist with Buffalo General Hospital. Clare is busy with the dictation of diagnostic radiographic and CT reports after review with our radiologists and will soon be performing a number of procedures including GI studies, paracentesis and thoracentesis.

Clare graduated from Weber State University in Ogden, Utah with a BS in Advanced Radiologic Sciences radiology practitioner assistant program.

One of Clare’s proudest moments in her work life was the day she earned her RPA certificate which she received after an exceptionally challenging program, followed by a very difficult exam. Her most proud moments personally were those special milestones when she became a wife, mother and grandmother. Clare resides with her family in the Town of Niagara.
COMING SOON: IMPROVED DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR NEUROENDOCRINE TUMOR DETECTION

Windsong Radiology is pleased to offer a better alternative to the traditional Octreoscan® Imaging for neuroendocrine tumor detection. Gallium-68 Dotatate, referred to as NETSPOT™, was FDA-approved late last year and is becoming available in Buffalo this July.

This new PET radiotracer offers as much as 30% better lesion detection, having 100 times higher affinity for neuroendocrine tumor receptor sites than Octreoscan®. NETSPOT™ also offers several advantages for the patient, compared to the product currently in use.

Foremost in advantages are patient comfort and convenience, as the diagnosis is made with this enhanced PET procedure in 2 hours, compared to 2-3 days. Radiation burden to the patient is 30-50% less because of the comparatively short half life of Gallium-68. Bowel cleansing is not necessary with this procedure as well.

The Mayo Clinic and MD Anderson are already offering this cutting edge procedure. Windsong is looking forward to expanding our diagnostic capabilities with this ground breaking exam to better serve our patients and referring providers next month. For more information, please contact Laurie Fuller at 716.631.2500 ext. 2152.

GOOD IMAGES, THE RIGHT DIAGNOSIS AND A GOOD RESOLUTION

Radiologists at Windsong Radiology are taking initiative outside of the reading room with their commitment to serve as imaging utilization managers. As many of our referring providers have learned, Windsong’s radiologists are more than pleased to take calls when there is a lack of clarity on orders. Although we take pride in the same day results offered to our patients, we also feel strongly that we can leverage the technology at hand to increase our role in the entire health care equation.

Here at Windsong we know that ensuring appropriate imaging only enhances diagnostic capabilities. As Andrew Weil professed, “As any doctor can tell you, the most crucial step toward healing is having the right diagnosis. If the disease is precisely identified, a good resolution is far more likely. Conversely, a bad diagnosis usually means a bad outcome, no matter how skilled the physician.” Don’t hesitate to call us at 716.631.2500 with any questions you may have.

3D MAMMOGRAM COVERAGE AND CODING

We have received many questions in regards to coding of tomosynthesis. There truly is no CPT for a 3D mammogram exam, but rather it is split into 2 separate billable CPT codes. In the case of a screening mammogram, we are to report CPT codes G0202 (screening 2D mammogram) and 77063 (screening Tomosynthesis).

CPT Code G0202 - Screening Mammogram is covered by all insurances with no out of pocket expense to the patient, for women over the age of 40 (or 1 baseline between the age of 35-40), with no current signs or symptoms.

CPT Code 77063 - Screening Tomosynthesis is covered by most major insurances. If the insurance does not cover it, it is due to an older policy that needs to be updated because it is still deemed as investigational. Windsong is working hard to have these overturned and we are slowly making progress. NYS Medicaid just recently announced they will be covering Screening Tomosynthesis.

When we say that Screening Tomosynthesis is covered, please be mindful that the patients’ insurance will either pay the claim in full or it will be applied to one of the 3 following categories - copay, coinsurance, or deductible, all of which the patient is responsible to pay.

FAXING YOUR SCRIPTS TO WINDSONG?

We have seen some issues revolving around faxing orders and want to urge our referring providers to use our main fax number which is 716.631.4051. This is a regularly monitored fax server line which ensures that all faxes are diverted to the appropriate satellite location. If you are using a satellite specific fax line, it is not receiving the same attention. Please review the phone numbers in your EMR and correct all the fax numbers to read 716.631.4051. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact the transcription department at 716.631.2500 ext. 2190.
MANY PATIENTS AT RISK FOR HEART DISEASE BENEFIT FROM CARDIAC CT

Two specific Cardiac computed tomography (Cardiac CT) exams allow the radiologist to visualize the heart’s anatomy and circulation to determine if it is functioning properly. According to Dr. Raja Cheruvu, who directs Windsong’s CT division, one of the CTs used on low to intermediate risk patients is the Calcium Scoring Cardiac CT. This CT involves taking non-invasive high resolution images of the chest and heart to detect calcium deposits. “This is very important because where there is calcium, there is plaque, and where there is plaque, there is usually a risk for heart attack,” says Dr. Cheruvu.

Coronary computed tomography angiography or Coronary CTA is typically performed on patients who are experiencing symptoms, such as chest pain, difficulty breathing, or an abnormal EKG and stenosis is suspected. While a 64-slice scanner is considered best practice, Windsong takes it a step further, using a 128-slice CT system which completes a 128-slice study in 164 milliseconds. Few medical facilities and emergency rooms have this technology available. It is non-invasive and can be performed on patients with arrhythmia and very fast heart rates. Dr. Cheruvu shared, “This type of high-quality imaging benefits patients by providing a rapid and accurate diagnosis without the need for more invasive procedures, such as an angiogram. These scans allow us to better detect coronary calcium deposits, assess narrowing of the blood vessels, and help predict disease outcomes.”

Windsong carefully evaluates whether or not patients are good candidates for these exams. If you would like more information, please call Laurie Fuller at 716.631.2500 ext. 2152.