

Transcript Details

This is a transcript of an educational program. Details about the program and additional media formats for the program are accessible by visiting: <https://reachmd.com/programs/covid-19-frontlines/breaking-down-barriers-in-breast-cancer-treatment-amid-a-pandemic/11846/>

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Breaking Down Barriers in Breast Cancer Treatment Amid a Pandemic

Announcer:

This is ReachMD, and you're listening to *COVID-19: On the Frontlines*. Taken from a live webinar sponsored by Penn Medicine, this program features Dr. Ann Steiner, Clinical Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Penn Medicine. Dr. Steiner discusses how the COVID-19 pandemic and other barriers to care might be impacting patients' breast health. Let's hear from Dr. Steiner now.

Female Speaker:

We're only restricting the COVID-19 testing to the Penn system. We use our own testing, so we have several locations in the Philadelphia region, in the suburbs, and in the New Jersey suburbs as well, so currently we are not allowing any outside testing.

Female Speaker 2:

I did notice my local Rite Aid had a tent, so I was just wondering what the parameters were with that. Okay.

So, Ann, one thing that I think a lot of us have worried about is how the current health crisis is going to affect our patients' health as a whole, but how do you specifically worry that it might impact your patients' breast health? And what barriers to care do you worry about during this difficult time?

Dr. Steiner:

This is obviously the most crucial question because it's a long-term question. So, first of all, I really encourage women who have a breast problem and need immediate screening to go ahead and to go get the imaging that they need and not delay it just because of the COVID crisis, knowing that much protection is offered to them when they go in for screening as is possible. So, if somebody calls me and has a new breast lump and I think they're at risk, I will usually—prior to this we would have them come into the office for an exam and then order imaging, but now I send them directly for imaging and avoid the office visit so that we can cut down on their interaction. But long-term what really concerns me is the access to health care totally. Prior to the COVID crisis, we had a 3% or 4% unemployment rate in this country, and now the unemployment rate is up to almost 15%, and last week more than 3 million people filed for unemployment, and many of these are women. In the United States, health insurance and access to health care is tied to employment, so my big concern is that we are going to see a surge in population of women who will not have access to health care, will not have access to screening and will not be able to meet the guidelines that we set for screening as well as further access if they have a breast-related problem that requires further workup.

Announcer:

That was Dr. Ann Steiner from Penn Medicine. To access more episodes from *COVID-19: On The Frontlines* and to add your perspectives towards the fight against this global pandemic, visit us at ReachMD.com and Become Part of the Knowledge. Thank you for listening.