



# Data Points

CWHS

RESULTS FROM THE CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVEY

**B**reast cancer is the second leading cause of deaths due to cancer among California women; only lung cancer accounts for more cancer deaths.<sup>1</sup> Although fewer women are dying from breast cancer today due to better treatment and earlier diagnosis, it is still the most commonly diagnosed cancer among California women.<sup>2</sup>

One way to reduce the number of deaths due to breast cancer is to detect the disease at an early and more treatable stage. While mammography is not always 100% accurate, it is an effective early-stage screening method that can detect a cancer up to several years before it can be felt on examination. The American Cancer Society and the California Department of Health Services recommend that women 40 years and older be regularly screened for breast cancer by having a clinical breast exam and a mammogram once a year.

Since 1997, the California Women's Health Survey has asked women if they ever had a mammogram, and how long it had been since they had their last mammogram. Respondents who ever had a mammogram could answer that their last mammogram was within the past one, two, three, or five years, or over five years

ago. This analysis is based on 2,331 (1997), 2,142 (1998), 2,343 (1999), and 2,273 (2000) women ages 40 and older participating in the surveys. Women who reported being previously diagnosed with breast cancer (only 5% of all women surveyed who ever had a mammogram) were included.

- Over the last four years, the percent of women reporting having their last mammogram within the past year remained approximately the same, at 58% in 1997, 60% in 1998, 62% in 1999, and 61% in 2000.
- Each year, the majority (67%) of women who reported ever having a mammogram had their last mammogram within the past year (not shown on graph).
- In 2000, 39% of women reported *not* having a mammogram within the past year; an indication that nearly 40% of women are not being regularly screened for breast cancer.

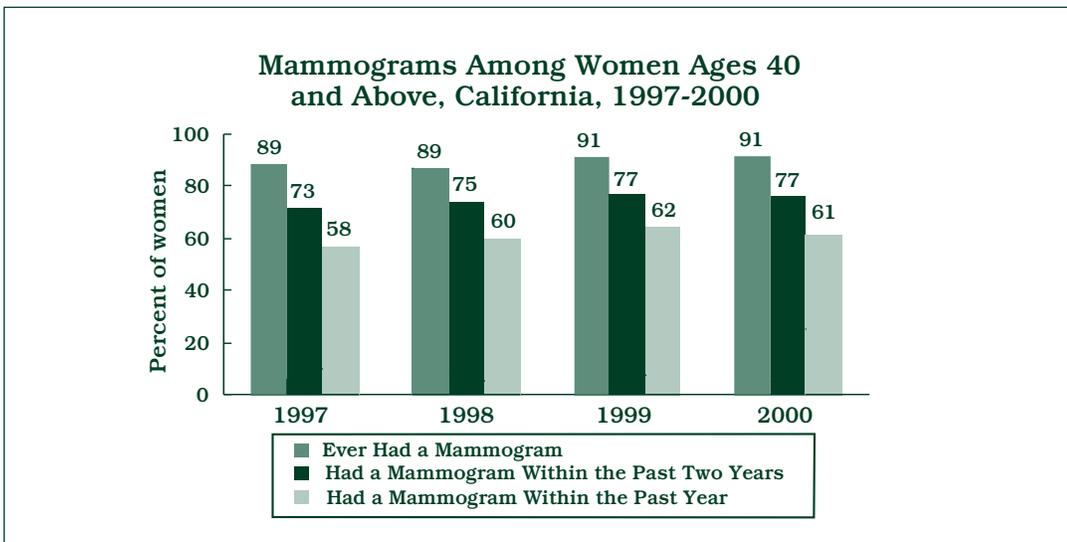
## MAMMOGRAMS AMONG WOMEN AGES 40 AND ABOVE, CALIFORNIA, 1997-2000

Cancer Detection Section, California Department of Health Services

**Public Health Message:** *Nearly 40% of California women surveyed 40 years and older are not regularly receiving mammograms. Regular screening for breast cancer leads to early diagnosis and can greatly reduce mortality due to breast cancer. It is recommended that women 40 years and older have yearly mammograms and clinical breast exams.*

<sup>1</sup> Kwong SL, Perkins CI, Morris CR, Cohen R, Allen M, Schlag R, Wright WE. Cancer in California: 1988-1998. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Health Services, Cancer Surveillance Section, December 2000.

<sup>2</sup> American Cancer Society, California Division, and Public Health Institute, California Cancer Registry. California Cancer Facts and Figures, 2001. Oakland, CA: American Cancer Society, California Division, September 2000.



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