

Mammogram centers add soft touches to help put patients at ease

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Jennifer Davis sat in a plush, light pink robe across from a glowing electric fireplace in the consult room.

She beat [cancer](#) once after going through radiation and having a mastectomy on her right side, so having a mammogram can stir up nerves for the 13-year cancer survivor.

The 66-year-old from Grove City just had her yearly cancer screening on her left breast and she recently sat patiently by herself on the white couch as instrumental music played gently in the background.

"It's quiet, it's calm," Davis said. "It's just not so unnerving ... and you're not in an office with 15 other women."

With its wooden floors, warm colors, candles, couches and relaxing music, the Katherine M. Cyran M.D. Breast Center looks and feels more like a spa than a mammogram center. It's reflective of a growing trend in mammograms centers across the county, including in central Ohio, that are designed to help patients feel more comfortable.

"I think there's the fear of finding something, and that's so paradoxical," said the center's director, Dr. Katherine Cyran, "because I try to tell patients, if there's something there, we really want to find it because it's not going to go away and it's just going to get bigger and harder to treat."

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in the United States and Ohio, according to the Ohio 2016 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Annual Report. In 2016, 245,299 new cases of female breast cancer were reported and 41,487 women died of breast cancer in the United States, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In Ohio that year, 9,648 new cases of female breast cancer were reported, and 1,711 women died of breast cancer.

"Breast cancer is something we know the smaller we catch it, the greater the chance for cure," Cyran said. "Mammograms have been proven time and time again that they can catch things early."

Women can start getting mammograms at 40 and should get a mammogram every year starting at 45, according to the American Cancer Society. At 55 and older, a woman can get [mammograms](#) every one or two years.

In 2016, 77.1% of Ohio women ages 50 and older reported they had a mammogram in the past two years, according to the report.

Fear and discomfort are two of the biggest barriers that prevent women from getting a mammogram, said Julie McMahon, director of strategy and mission at Susan G. Komen Columbus.

"If they don't have a good experience, they are going to tell their sister the same thing," she said.

Centers like Cyran's are hoping to reduce those fears.

"I wanted to make this office feel as if the patient were coming into my home," Cyran said. "We try to make it really comfortable and remove that institutional feel with bringing in soft colors, soft music and nice, non-medical looking furniture."

Cyran opened her center seven years ago. She has been practicing mammography for more than 25 years.

"People come with such anxiety and when they're given a clear bill of health, they feel such tremendous relief oftentimes," Cyran said.

Cathy Pultz, 60, wrote a note to Cyran that is now in one of the scrapbooks she keeps for other patients to read.

She was diagnosed with stage 1 breast cancer after going in for her yearly mammogram at Cyran's clinic last November, and she decided to

get a double mastectomy in January because [breast cancer](#) runs in her family. Luckily, the cancer was caught early enough that Pultz didn't have to go through radiation or chemotherapy.

She fears the cancer would have spread if she waited another year to get a mammogram and is a big advocate for women's [breast](#) health. She started going to Cyran's in 2012 and said the soft touches of the center show compassion.

"It's those soft, comforting touches. ... I like Dr. Cyran's because it's small and when you're waiting to see her and get your mammogram there is a fireplace, a little comfy couch and inspirational books. You don't feel like you're in this sterile doctor's office in a little paper sack," Pultz, of Upper Arlington, said. "It does make a psychological difference in feeling comfortable ... as opposed to feeling nervous or anxious."

Another mammogram center with a tranquil environment is Solis Mammography, a chain of about 60 centers with locations in several states, including two in central Ohio—5156 Blazer Parkway in Dublin and 974 Bethel Road on the Northwest Side.

"It's much more spalike," said Anne Warren, Solis Mammography's senior brand director. "It's very calming."

Solis Mammography has inspirational quotes on the walls, soft colors and relaxing music.

"We really try to eliminate all the barriers women might have to get a mammogram," said Ellen Hoffman, Solis Mammography director of digital marketing.

About 20 minutes after Jennifer Davis got her mammogram at Cyran's clinic, the doctor talked with her about her results.

"Your mammogram looks terrific," Cyran said.

"Oh, thank you," Davis said, letting out a sigh of relief as she hugged the doctor.

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