

## HEALTHCARE

# Early detection and real-time medical image sharing save lives

Mary Jo Henderson, CEO and Managing Member of HerScan, a mobile breast ultrasound screening company, discusses why ultrasound is so crucial in the fight against breast cancer and how HerScan helps more women access the screening and care they need.

By [Mary Jo Henderson](#)

CEO and Managing Member, HerScan, *Guest Blogger*



Each year during Breast Cancer Awareness Month, women are urged to do everything they can to screen for and detect cancer early. For women forty and older, that typically involves having an annual mammogram; but for

women with dense breast tissue (around 50% of women in the US), mammography on its own is not enough.

The trouble is that dense breast tissue and cancerous tumors both appear white on mammograms, making cancers very difficult to spot. It's like trying to find a snowball in a snowstorm. Women with dense breast tissue are more likely to get breast cancer, and they're also less likely to have their cancer detected early—it's a lethal combination.

Until relatively recently, the problem was compounded by the fact that most women in the US rarely even knew if they had dense breast tissue. That's why I've always been inspired by the tireless work of Dr. Nancy Capello, the founder of [Are You Dense](#), who successfully campaigned for legislation in 38 states to require physicians to tell women about their breast tissue density.

Sadly, Nancy lost her own battle with cancer; her diagnosis came too late because her mammograms found no sign of what turned out to be Stage 3c cancer. But her work lives on—in the education and advocacy of Are You Dense, in the legislation she fought for, and in the work of my organization, [HerScan](#).

### Taking ultrasound on the road

HerScan is a mobile breast ultrasound screening company that I founded in 2011. We aim to make it easy, convenient, and affordable for women to access lifesaving preventative care.

Ultrasound removes the limitations of mammography for studying breast health because it allows us to see right through to the back of the chest



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<https://whatsnext.nuance.com/healthcare/herscan-empowers-patients-with-powershare/>

wall. Numerous studies have shown that having regular ultrasound scans as part of a breast health regime can increase detection rates to 97% (compared to 48% detection with mammography alone). In fact, it was only when Nancy continued to feel unwell and went for an ultrasound scan that she discovered she had a [2.5cm suspicious lesion in her breast](#).

Nancy's story is the reason I founded HerScan, to bring ultrasound screening on the road to help women with dense breast tissue gain more control over their breast health.

Over the last 10 years, we've scanned more than 70,000 women, and HerScan now operates in 17 states. I like to think we've had a big impact on many people's lives, but one thing that always bothered me was that the women who came to us had to wait so long to get their test results.

#### **Accelerating care and reducing anxiety**

When you find a lump in your breast, there's nothing worse than waiting for the result of a scan. It's a very anxious time, and we wanted to make that wait as short as possible, which is why we now use [Nuance PowerShare Image Sharing](#).

By sharing imaging from our mobile screening sites directly with our board-certified radiologists across the

country, we can turn around reports in a fraction of the time it used to take. Our old system of mailing imaging studies back and forth could take up to two weeks. Now, we can get reports to women within days of their scan. By embedding PowerShare on our own website, the Nuance team made it simple for our clients to log in, view their results, and share the imaging with their own doctors. We've received nothing but positive feedback since launching PowerShare. The experience is intuitive, fast, and secure—and with all the imaging and reports in one place, women can compare their studies year over year with their doctor and take control of their breast health.

I hate for women to be left feeling anxious when they're not sure if a mass they've found is a carcinoma or a simple cyst. PowerShare accelerates the entire process, helping us get the imaging read and back in the hands of our patients as quickly as possible.

You can learn more about how we're using PowerShare, and how it helps us empower women to do more for their breast health, in the [case study](#) we recently produced with Nuance.

And don't forget—this Breast Cancer Awareness Month, let's all shout it loud and clear: *Early detection saves lives!*



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#### **About Nuance Communications, Inc.**

[Nuance Communications](#) (Nuance) is a technology pioneer with market leadership in conversational AI and ambient intelligence. A full-service partner trusted by 77 percent of U.S. hospitals and 85 percent of the Fortune 100 companies worldwide, Nuance creates intuitive solutions that amplify people's ability to help others.