

CHARTIS TOP READS

Breast Cancer Awareness Month highlights growing challenges

Week of October 26 - November 1, 2025

| OCT 31, 2025

<https://www.chartis.com/insights/breast-cancer-awareness-month-highlights-growing-challenges>

The Buzz This Week

October marks Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a time to honor survivors, support those in treatment, and renew public focus on early detection. Breast cancer remains the most common cancer in women, despite advances in screening and treatment, yet broader investment in women's health continues to lag behind.

Early onset cancer is increasingly affecting adults under the age of 50 across several tumor types, including breast, colorectal, and thyroid. Between 1990 and 2019, global incidence of early onset cancers grew by nearly 80%, while mortality increased by almost 30%. Researchers attribute a combination of factors, including shifts in diet and lifestyle, environmental exposures, and evolving genetic or microbiome influences.

At the same time, technology continues to advance detection. A recent National Cancer Institute (NCI) study found that artificial intelligence (AI) tools identified 76% of interval breast cancers—aggressive tumors that develop between routine screenings that are often missed in earlier scans—across 131 mammograms reviewed. These findings suggest that AI can support radiologists, improve sensitivity, and detect cancers earlier.

Yet even as technology accelerates, investment in women's health remains limited. Globally, only 1% of research and development funding targets women's health outside oncology, and 2% of venture capital investments focus on women. The Gates Foundation's recent \$2.5 billion commitment to women's health through 2030 is helping narrow that gap, but overall funding still lags far behind.

Why It Matters

More than 2 million new cancer diagnoses are projected in the US next year, even as the number of oncologists per 100,000 people continues to decline—from 15.9 per 100,000 older adults in 2014 to 14.9 in 2024. The result is a widening gap between patient needs and access—longer wait times, overextended staff, and care access inequities. The increase in younger cancer patients could deepen those pressures as they enter care earlier and remain in follow-up care longer.

A recent Lancet analysis projects that global cancer deaths will increase 74% by 2050, from 10.4 million in 2023 to 18.6 million. Much of that growth will occur in low- and middle-income countries, but high-income countries will feel the strain as incidence and care costs climb. The financial burden is significant for patients, providers, and employers alike. Cancer care is expected to remain the top driver of employer healthcare cost inflation in 2026—for the fourth consecutive year.

For health systems, these trends represent a generational shift. Expanding capacity, strengthening training, retaining oncology clinicians, and ensuring equitable access will be key to sustaining care delivery. Diversifying the care team will also be essential—leveraging advanced practice providers, nurses, and navigators to extend reach and ease physician workload. At the same time, incorporating new technology—from AI to predictive analytics—will require disciplined evaluation to ensure measurable value without adding unsustainable costs.

As Breast Cancer Awareness Month reminds us, early detection saves lives—but awareness alone is not enough. The oncology landscape is changing, and health systems must prepare not only for more patients but also for a different kind of patient—often younger people with more complex needs that extend beyond treatment. These patients may face fertility challenges and long-term survivorship planning that demand coordination across specialties. The challenge ahead is balancing innovation, workforce capacity, and financial sustainability.

RELATED LINKS

American Society of Clinical Oncology:

Becker's:

ESMO Open Science for Optimal Cancer Care:

Chartis Top Reads

[View All](#)

Our services

[STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION](#)

[PERFORMANCE TRANSFORMATION](#)

[DIGITAL & TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMATION](#)

[CHARTIS CENTERS FOR AI & STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE](#)

[PAYER TRANSFORMATION](#)

[STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS & CHANGE MANAGEMENT](#)

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Emily Nevarez
Research Manager