



Mammographers Speak Out

Improving Patient and Staff Experience with Bella Blankets®: Customers Share Their Positive Experience when Making the Switch from Another Product

**Maria Shonyo, President
Vela Technologies, LLC**

Introduction

A medical device market research company spoke with customers who transitioned from using another mammography receptor plate cover to using Bella Blankets. In this paper we share the insight gained from those customers about their experience, the benefits to staff and patients, and how patients readily accepted the change when switching from another product.

Why Use Protective Covers?

Technologists and other mammography staff members described many advantages of using receptor plate covers, including how they improve comfort during the exam which helps relax the patient, making positioning easier. Receptor plate covers also help improve hygiene, as a new cover is used for each patient.

Mammographers also cited how Bella Blankets in particular not only help make positioning easier, they also allow for greater tissue acquisition by holding the breast in place. Customers also described how Bella Blankets keep the breast from sticking to the receptor plate, thereby reducing skin tears.

Overall, the feedback on Bella Blankets from both customers and patients was very positive.

Key Discoveries when Making the Switch to Bella Blankets from Another Product

- Thinner is Better
- Effortless Application and Removal
- Better Hygiene is a Plus
- Comfort is Key
- Change Can Cause Apprehension
- Ease of Positioning is Important
- Skin Tears Can Be Avoided
- Looks Do Matter
- Easily Fits into the Budget
- Improved Patient Satisfaction
- Image Quality is Essential
- Patients Have a Choice

Thinner is Better:

“With Bella Blankets, one of the best points is how close we can get to the receptor and not lose tissue.”

Bella Blankets® are made of a thin fabric-like material which customers say improves tissue acquisition, makes breast tissue less prone to “catching,” and take up less storage space than thick pads.

As Autumn Dinger, QC Technologist at Penn Highlands Healthcare in DuBois, PA, explains, “It’s easier to position our patients because you don’t have that thickness. It’s more like positioning with nothing there, but yet, you still have that comfort of having something there.” Ms. Dinger adds, “All of the techs completely agreed that they liked Bella Blankets better because of the thickness difference.”

Dawn Herzog, Mammography Supervisor at Blessing Hospital in Quincy, IL, tells us “I like the fact that they were thinner and I felt like we were able to get more posterior tissue.” Ms. Herzog further explains “With Bella Blankets it feels like the breast will slide over it easier, it didn’t have that catching feel to it that felt like it was taking skin right with it.”

Tiffany Peek, Diagnostic Imaging Department Supervisor at Summit Pacific Medical Center in Elma, WA, says “With Bella Blankets, one of the best points is how close we can get to the receptor and not lose tissue. With some patients, every little bit counts, especially when they’re small chested. You really want to get as far back as possible, so Bella Blankets work much better.”



Ms. Peek also talked about the space-saving benefits. “If you’re storing the other product for recycling, you need a place to store them and that takes up space. With Bella Blankets, we just throw them away. That’s a bonus as well, so we’re not trying to store the used ones until we have enough to send back. I like that it is thinner so it takes up less space.”

Looks Do Matter:

“Our patients like the look of Bella Blankets.”

Customers stated that the colorful floral design on Bella Blankets attracts patients’ attention.

Ms. Peek told us their patients like the appearance of Bella Blankets. “People like the pattern on Bella Blankets. I’ve had a lot of people comment on how they look.” Ms. Dinger had a similar comment, “A lot of times we’ll put it on in front of the patients and they say, ‘Oh, you have that flowered thing.’” Ms. Herzog concurred, saying “Our patients like the look.”

Comfort is Key:

“I think what surprised me was that the patient response was better than I thought it was going to be. The patients didn’t really notice a difference in the thickness.”

Patient comfort during mammography is essential. Patients appreciate the warmth of Bella Blankets as well as the fabric-like material that provides a barrier from the cold, hard receptor.

Terri Jolly, Lead Technologist at Radiology and Imaging of South Texas in Corpus Christi, TX, said “I think what surprised me was that the patient response was better than I thought it was going to be. I was afraid the Bella Blankets weren’t going to make any difference. But the patients didn’t really notice a difference in the thickness of it. They appreciated the fact that it still kept the machine warm. Almost every day I have someone say, ‘Oh, I’m so glad you have these because it’s not cold.’ The fact that it’s not cold, and the texture, makes a big difference to the patients.”

Ms. Peek made a similar observation, “It provides that barrier so that you’re not sticking to the receptor, it still provides the comfort, and it still holds the tissue very well.”

Ms. Herzog’s comments on patient comfort included “The patients said it was comfortable, they said it was warm, they said they liked them. From a patient perspective, it surprised me that you could go from something so cushy to something that really doesn’t have any cushion and it could be just as comfortable if not more.”



Image Quality is Essential:

“We could tell that we were getting a better exam and still providing a comfortable exam at the same time.”

Image quality was consistently cited by customers as being a significant benefit of Bella Blankets.

“The reason we quit using our previous product was because it was causing artifact,” explains Ms. Jolly. “We couldn’t have any kind of artifact on the images that the radiologists would have to deal with. Bella Blankets® is superior because of the image quality.”

Ms. Peek commented on image quality with Bella Blankets, saying “We were able to get more tissue in the machine and we’re getting better pictures because of that, so that’s great, and it still holds the breast up because it’s textured a little bit. If you were just on the bare receptor, the breast would slide down, so this helps

hold the breast in place without excessive pressure. As techs, we like that it helps hold the breasts in place while we’re getting them into the positions we need them in. The more tissue the better. We’re going to catch things sooner if we get everything. Even just a half a centimeter of tissue can still hold a lot of information.”

Ms. Dinger confirms, saying “What matters is the patient and getting the best picture you can so you get the most accurate reading.”

“It’s the best of all worlds, really,” elaborates Ms. Peek.

“The patient can feel a difference, it’s warmer, you’re not up against the cold, hard machine, there’s a buffer there. And, we are still able to get all the tissue needed to get a good exam. And us as techs, we could tell that we were getting a better exam and still providing a comfortable exam at the same time. Number one is that we have to get very good images in order to evaluate the breast tissue the best we can to detect breast cancer.”

Staff at another facility were surprised they could use Bella Blankets during spot compression and magnification views as well.

One technologist said she is able to feel where the edge of the receptor plate was in the MLO view with Bella Blankets, whereas in the past, with the thicker pad she could not, which made it difficult to know if she had all the tissue on the image. Additionally, staff became excited when they heard their cases were showing more tissue, especially since they didn’t change how they positioned the patient.

“What made us decide to use Bella Blankets,” explains Ms. Herzog, “was the research that showed us that we could get more posterior tissue, then actually seeing that from some of our images. If we had a patient who had a small nodule close to the chest wall, we could tell during the comparison and we would say, ‘Look, I got this much more of this nodule on there.’ And it may have been a millimeter or so but it was still more.”

Skin Tears Can Be Avoided:

“Bella Blankets help the breast from sticking. It helps prevent skin tears and creates a barrier for the patient.”

Bella Blankets help prevent skin tears, which can be an unfortunate and painful occurrence during mammography.

Ms. Jolly tells us “whenever patients come in and have really large, pendulous breasts and are sweaty, they can be very sensitive underneath there. Their skin is tender and it tears easily. Bella Blankets really helps them not stick to the machine and prevents that tearing. I do know that it really makes the difference because they don’t stick to the detector anymore. When they’re sweaty like that, they would stick. Bella Blankets really helped with that.”

Ms. Peek commented on how Bella Blankets help with skin tears as well, saying “I know Bella Blankets help the breast from sticking. It prevents skin tears and creates a barrier for the patients.”

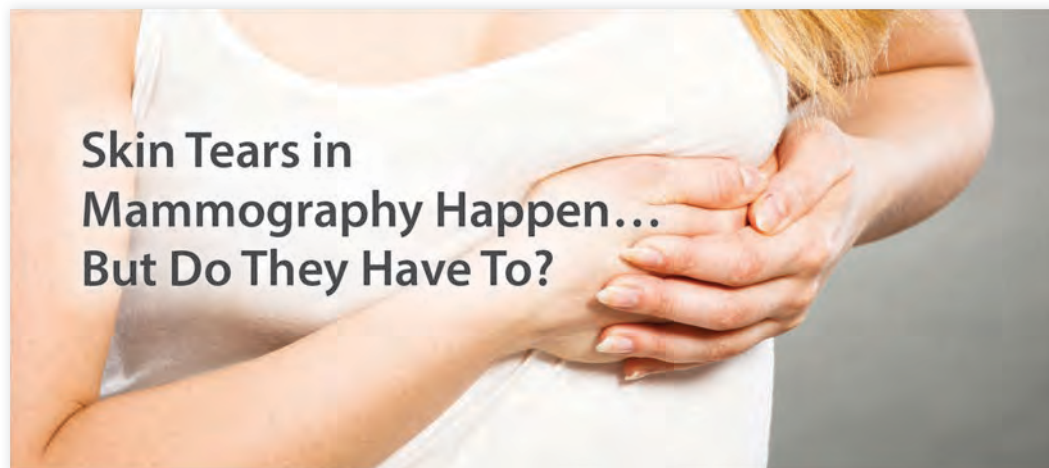
Ms. Dinger explained the extra steps they take to manage skin tears. “Even if patients are sore under their breasts, they don’t really think about that until they get here and we start positioning them. A lot of our techs here, especially with larger breasted patients, will ask if their breasts are sore underneath, to prepare ourselves if their skin is already compromised.” She goes on to say “because of the material that the receptor plate is made of, if your skin is any little bit tacky or moist, it sticks right to it, whereas Bella Blankets allows the breast to give a little bit instead of just being stuck in place.”

Better Hygiene Is A Plus:

“If anybody has any sort of infection, Bella Blankets adds an extra level of protection.”

Receptor plate covers can also improve hygiene.

Ms. Peek explains, “It visually provides that barrier to the patient so they know they’re against something



**Skin Tears in
Mammography Happen...
But Do They Have To?**

that’s just for them. It protects them and it also protects the machine; if anybody has any sort of infection, Bella Blankets adds an extra level of protection. It’s nice that it protects and has a barrier both ways: a barrier for the patient and a barrier to the machine.” Ms. Jolly had a similar comment: “We use one for every patient. It’s more hygienic.”

Improved Patient Satisfaction:

“We get better pictures, and patients want that.”

The aforementioned factors all lead to improved patient satisfaction, which helps ensure patients return for future mammograms or other procedures. These patients may also be more likely to refer other patients. Notably, there were no negative comments received from patients about the switch to Bella Blankets with the mammographers who were interviewed.

Ms. Dinger talked about the importance of the patient experience, “Patients are more at ease knowing that we’re using Bella Blankets. They feel like we actually care about them, that we’re going that extra step, especially when the other facilities in the area aren’t using them. A lot of our patients come to us for biopsies and additional testing and that kind of thing. They will come to us and say, ‘Oh, what is that?’ We would explain it, and they’d tell us, ‘That is awesome.’ We’re doing something for them that we don’t have to do. We try to make the patient experience a little bit better for them.”

Ms. Peek brought up another important aspect, “We get better pictures, and patients want that. If they’re going

through this type of exam, they only want to do it once. They want us to do it right. They don't want to have to repeat it."

All customers interviewed stated that they did not receive any negative comments about Bella Blankets from patients who had experience with the previous product. In fact, Ms. Jolly added, "Sometimes new patients will say, 'Wow, this is really nice, I like this.'" Ms. Dinger said, "After we finish a mammogram, patients will say, 'That actually made a difference. It wasn't so bad.'"

Ms. Peek elaborated, saying "We want to provide patient comfort, patient experience, and have people come back. We want to see these ladies every year. They say, 'Oh yeah, that does help. That does make a difference.' If your patients aren't comfortable, they don't want to come back. And any time patients feel good about their experience, they're going to recommend the facility. Whatever we can do to make the experience better, to make sure they're coming back annually or whenever they should, is number one priority, to make sure everybody is getting quality healthcare in our community."

about them. We try everything we can to make that experience better for them. You want your patients to stay at your facility. You want them to stay with you as long as they can and keep coming back. So, in the end, knowing that they're being taken care of, and that we go that extra mile to insure that and to make them more comfortable, it definitely makes a big difference. Bella Blankets definitely have made a huge difference in our facility and for our patients and how happy they are with their care when they're here."

Staff Perspective Counts: Ease of Positioning is Important:

"We like that Bella Blankets hold the breast on the detector and it's easier to position compared to the other product."

Ease of patient positioning with Bella Blankets was also cited by customers.

"It puts them at ease so that they can be more relaxed for the exam," says Ms. Dinger, "which in turn which makes it a lot easier to position your patients. The more relaxed they are, the easier it is to get them in and get to the best imaging that you can get." Ms. Jolly notes that "If patients are comfortable, they cooperate more. And that means not only is the breast being held on more, it's so much easier to position the patient when they're cooperative." She also said she "really likes that it holds the breast on the detector and it's easier

to position compared to the other product. I think that's the most important to me: that it is easy to position the patient using Bella Blankets."

Lastly, Ms. Jolly talked about what she says to patients. "I'll tell patients that it helps me obtain more tissue. I always tell them that that's what the whole deal is: getting as much tissue as we can so the doctors can get a good diagnosis. They always respond to that."

Get More Pectoralis Muscle to Save More Lives



Ms. Herzog notes, "It definitely impacts us because women really focus on the discomfort of having a mammogram. We make sure we talk about Bella Blankets® whenever we can." She further explains, "If patients ask me, I tell them we did a trial evaluation comparing the two products and patients were happier with Bella Blankets."

"You want to make your patients happy." says Ms. Dinger. "You want to make sure they know you care

patient comfort and patient acceptance was concerned, it was comparable.”

Ms. Peek said, “Patients might say ‘Oh, that’s not the same as last time.’ As mammo techs, we’d respond saying, ‘No, it’s not the same, but it’s still warmer and more comfortable than the plain machine.’ They didn’t complain during the experience of having the mammogram.” Similarly, Ms. Dinger says, “The patients were a little leery just because the way humans are with any change. Everyone is apprehensive to a certain point, and some are more apprehensive than others. In the end,

Patients Have a Choice:

“It definitely draws patients to your facility when you can show that you are doing something that you don’t have to do.”

As patients become more involved in their health decisions, including deciding what facility they utilize for non-emergent care, finding ways to stand out and offer a competitive advantage becomes increasingly important. Customers affirmed that Bella Blankets helps them stand out and draw patients to their facility.

“Our patients are very impressed and like the fact that we use Bella Blankets,” says Ms. Jolly. “They’re very appreciative. I think that does set us apart.” Ms. Herzog similarly says, “It’s something that we feel is important to provide for the patients.”

Ms. Dinger went into more detail, saying “Patients now, more than ever, are more aware of their testing and what’s available to them, and what is being done and what’s not being done as opposed to years ago when you

just did what you had to do and you didn’t really have a choice in the matter. They are definitely up on what is better for them, even just their overall patient experience. Patients are definitely finding their voice in their own care. They’re not just sitting by the sidelines and letting someone dictate to them what they should do. The patients do notice and they are very aware of what they like and what they don’t like – and they make you aware of that also.”

Ms. Dinger continued on this topic, saying, “It definitely draws patients to your facility when you can show that you’re doing something that you don’t have to do but that you are doing it to make that experience better for them. They do remark and they do remember. It is definitely something they always remember, they ask if we’re putting it on. They know it makes a difference for them.”



they would say, ‘Oh yeah, that was just as good.’”

From the technologists’ perspective, Ms. Dinger explains “It’s like anything, you get used to something, especially the way mammography is, it’s so user dependent on how you position. Every tech positions so differently, and you achieve the exact same outcome, but positioning, we all have little tricks and you get used to a certain thing. Then, when they want to change it you may wonder if your positioning is going to be affected.”

Ms. Herzog confirmed how the initial reluctance of the staff quickly turned into acceptance, “The staff was a little reluctant because they were happy with what they had before, but now the staff is happy with Bella Blankets®.”

Beekley Medical® Bella Blankets Survey

For a broader perspective, the table below shows the results of a 2018 Beekley Medical survey in which respondents indicated the reason for their interest in using Bella Blankets.

Interest in Using Bella Blankets	% of Respondents
Patient Satisfaction	16%
Procedures	14%
Warmer/Comfort	14%
Skin Tears	13%
Improve Positioning	10%
More Breast Tissue	10%
IMF Open	9%
Sanitary	6%
EQUIP	4%
Shield Cuts	4%



Bella Blankets®

protective coverlets help increase tissue acquisition, immobilize hard to position breasts, prevent breasts from sticking to receptor plate, shield cuts or infections in the inframammary fold, and act as a sanitary barrier. Constructed from a textured material and thin by design, Bella Blankets allow technologists to position patients as close to the chest wall as possible. New Vertical Channel Technology™ allows air to push out and release upon application, reducing air bubbles. Easy-lift PIK-UP™ tab allows for easy removal without leaving residue.



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