

# Center Stage™

A quarterly publication by West Michigan Cancer Center

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Terry McKay and Joseph Mirro, MD

## West Michigan Cancer Center Announces Leadership Transition

West Michigan Cancer Center, a collaboration of Borgess Health and Bronson Healthcare Group, has appointed Joseph Mirro, MD, to the dual role of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chief Medical Officer (CMO). He replaces founding CEO Terry McKay, who retired July 17th.

A distinguished pediatric oncologist and educator, Dr. Mirro brings to WMCC more than 35 years experience in oncology and healthcare leadership, most recently as Vice President of Cancer Services at Milwaukee, Wisconsin-based Aurora Health Care. Prior to that, he served as a pediatric oncologist, medical school professor and administrator at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee.

WMCC's strong foundation and reputation for excellence in serving cancer patients across

Southwest Michigan drew Dr. Mirro to Kalamazoo. "I am excited to join the outstanding staff at WMCC and help provide the patients we serve with unsurpassed cancer care," Mirro said. "I am honored to become associated with two excellent health care systems; and will do everything I can to advance the mission of both Bronson and Borgess so that every person in and around Kalamazoo can receive the best medical treatments available anywhere. Additionally, the opportunity to contribute to the academic mission of the new medical school makes this position at WMCC perfect." The search committee's decision to select Dr. Mirro for the combined CEO/CMO position reflects WMCC's continuing commitment to clinical excellence in cancer care. Frank Sardone, president and CEO of Bronson Healthcare, said he applauds retired CEO Terry McKay for her many years of leadership and sees Dr. Mirro as

the perfect choice as WMCC moves forward.

"Dr. Mirro's unique combination of administrative, clinical and academic leadership skills will enable him to make the most of this area's superb medical resources. This is the right time for a physician leader to engage providers, academia and the hospitals in delivering world-class cancer care to our community."

Current CEO Terry McKay has led the organization for 17 years, from its inception through its steady ascent to a top performing community cancer center. Today, WMCC averages nearly 80,000 patient visits annually and has earned numerous distinctions for clinical excellence. Paul Spaude, CEO of Borgess Health, said with McKay's leadership, the community has been the beneficiary of technology usually available only at university

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Kalamazoo, MI 49007-3731  
200 North Park Street

Together, we win.

West Michigan Cancer Center



## Patient Benefits from Meeting of the Minds

As a divorced mother of two and area hospital employee, 42-year old Melissa K. worried about how her breast cancer diagnosis would change her life. A medical professional, one of the biggest questions swirling in her mind involved the type of care she would receive. Would Kalamazoo be able to deliver the state-of-the-art of care commonly found at large, university-based research hospitals? The answer from her surgeon was 'yes'.

West Michigan Cancer Center hosts seven tumor conferences and three clinics designed to meet the educational needs of physicians and provide the highest standard of care for cancer patients. A team of doctors and nurses reviews images and

pathology reports and discusses the latest treatment protocols. "I feel I'm getting better quality care with all the practitioners in the room, sharing opinions and learning from each other," said Melissa.

Melissa is finished with chemotherapy treatments following several surgeries to remove cancerous margins. In addition, her medical team agreed that she would benefit from a course of radiation therapy following chemo. Because a maternal aunt also had breast cancer, Melissa sought genetic counseling and testing at WMCC. As a cancer patient who seeks every opportunity available to improve her health, Melissa

participates in the WMCC Wellness Program by using the fitness room twice a week. She received the green light to exercise while in treatment by all of the doctors who collaborate in her care.

If you'd like more information about WMCC's multi-disciplinary cancer conferences and clinics, call 269-382-2500.



Melissa K. and friend Linda Holzwarth

## Planned Giving Makes it Possible for Everyone to Win

The success of West Michigan Cancer Center depends on your vision and generosity. Whether you are a patient grateful for the care you received, a family member or caregiver who participated in our Patient Care Services Program, or someone who believes in the life-changing medical care, research, and services provided at WMCC, you can give back by making a planned gift.

You don't need to be wealthy to make a planned gift. Whatever your financial ability, there are a variety of options, all making a difference in the fight against cancer. Planned gifts often receive special tax benefits and include gifts through

your estate, of principal that pay you income for life, of retirement plan assets, or real property. Planned gifts can be tailored to meet your current and future needs, and provide you with significant tax savings and other benefits. Examples of some gifts include:

### Bequests

Giving by bequest costs nothing now, and it may give you a great deal of satisfaction knowing your future gift will live on. A gift through your will or trust is entirely free from federal estate taxes. You may make a bequest and retain the ability to change it at any time.

### Gift of Securities

Gifts of publicly traded securities that have appreciated in value allow you to claim a charitable deduction for the full market value of the securities on the date the gift is made. You pay no capital gains tax on the appreciation.

### Retirement Plan Beneficiary

If you die with retirement plan assets in your estate, those assets are subject to income taxes. This can reduce the amount that normally would be passed to heirs by up to 35 percent. Consider these gift options: 1) Designate WMCC as the primary beneficiary for a percentage (1 to 100 percent) of your retirement plan assets, designating a specific

amount to be paid to us before the remainder is divided among family beneficiaries; 2) Make WMCC the contingent beneficiary to receive the balance only if your loved one, as primary beneficiary, doesn't survive you.

Your gift to WMCC makes a difference in the lives of cancer patients now and in the future by supporting innovative cancer patient care, research, education and prevention programs right here in Southwest Michigan. For more information, please contact Jessica Hermann-Wilmarth, Director of Development, at 269-373-0129 or by email at [jwilmarth@wmcc.org](mailto:jwilmarth@wmcc.org).

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research hospitals. "Over the years, Terry McKay has been a remarkable force," said Spaude. "She's grown the capabilities of the organization, and ensured the community always had every advantage that technology and talent would permit."

Spaude added that McKay left the Cancer Center in an excellent position, poised and ready for a projected growth in patients due to the aging baby boom population. Teamwork, collaboration and a commitment to delivering the highest quality care to patients are the reasons WMCC is positioned for the future, according to McKay. "We are very fortunate to have such highly skilled, compassionate people, taking good care of every patient, every time, every day", said McKay. "It has been an absolute joy to work with everyone and an honor to create an organization that I envision as the ultimate environment and culture to care for cancer patients. In 17 years, there was never a day that I didn't enjoy coming to work," added McKay.

## WMCC Staff Grows

Salvador Espinoza, MD, joins WMCC after spending five years as a radiation oncologist with the Lakeland Regional Health System in St. Joseph, Michigan.

Dr. Espinoza earned his medical degree from Universidad Autonoma de Guadalajara School of Medicine in Guadalajara, Mexico. He completed his internship and residency at the Westchester Medical Center at New York Medical College in Valhalla, New York. Dr. Espinoza also holds a Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences from the University of California, Irvine. Dr. Espinoza is board eligible in radiation oncology and has volunteered with several non-profit organizations including the International Red Cross. He is a member of the American Board of Radiology and the American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology.



Dr. Salvador Espinoza

# Fighting Nail Cancer: My father's subungual acral lentiginous melanoma story

On New Years Day, 2009, my dad told me that his brown toenail, which he had been treating for years with hydrogen peroxide and a good scrub, was actually subungual acral lentiginous melanoma. At that time, I was still in training to be a gynecologic oncologist, and had never seen malignant melanoma of the toenail. I had, however, seen malignant melanoma of the female reproductive tract, and knew it could be an aggressive disease if not caught early. My initial response was that of a daughter, hearing that my dad has cancer: fear, sadness, and more fear. My second response was that of a future cancer doctor: get more information and take action. This was the start of my education not only about the disease, but about what it is like to balance being a cancer doctor and a cancer patient's daughter.



Art Hoekstra and his daughter, WMCC's Dr. Anna Hoekstra.

My father is an organizer and educator, previously about issues of race, and more recently about subungual acral lentiginous melanoma. The first thing he did was rename the disease. He transformed the tongue-twister of a name into something that everyone could remember and understand: nail cancer. He and a colleague, now both survivors of nail cancer, established an organizing group to raise awareness of the disease in the health system, cosmetology industry, and the public. Knowing that healthcare providers, my peers, rarely see the disease, we also focused on exposing them to the appearance of affected nails. Participating in this group has given me

the opportunity to be supportive as both a doctor and a daughter.

The biggest challenge for me has been giving my dad bad news. As a doctor, I have access to my dad's results: biopsies, CT scans, MRIs, and PET scans. As a daughter, I cannot resist knowing the results as soon as they are

available. When news is good, I enjoy running over to my parents' house after work to celebrate. When news is bad, however, I wish I was not a doctor at all. I understand what the bad news means for my dad as a patient, and then transition quickly into what it means for my dad, the guy who cooked me fried raisin bread at the campground, taught me how to drive, taught me, above all, to treat others with kindness, and always strive for justice. Standing before my father telling him his MRI showed that the cancer had spread to his brain

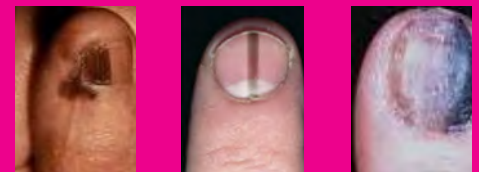
started out as a clinical experience, using a solemn, and straight face. My face quickly twisted into that of my father's daughter, crying and expressing how sorry and scared I was.

I could not be more proud of my father, who is still battling nail cancer. He has shown immeasurable physical and personal strength.

He has endured numerous chemotherapy regimens, various forms of radiation, and two surgeries. He continues his passionate fight against cancer, and his fight for those who are yet to be diagnosed, by organizing with leaders in healthcare and the manicure/pedicure industry. His hope is that through telling his story, others with brown discoloration of their nails will get biopsies early, in hopes of a complete cure.

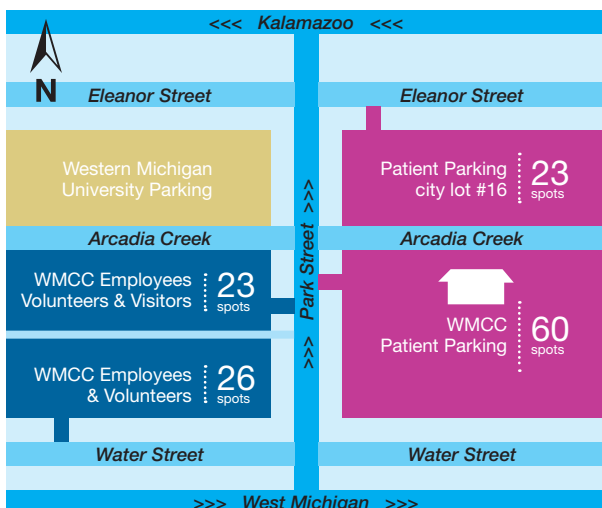
If you or someone you know has an abnormally colored finger or toenail, biopsies are the first step to a cure. Contact your dermatologist, hand/

foot surgeon, or plastic surgeon for a biopsy. More information can be obtained at [www.nailcancerawareness.com](http://www.nailcancerawareness.com).



Various forms of nail cancer.

## WMCC Parking Options Expand



Recent growth at WMCC has led to increased parking difficulties in the area surrounding our Center in downtown Kalamazoo. We want you to know that we recognize the frustration this creates and are taking the issue very seriously.

Plans are underway to add additional parking to the north of our building to be utilized exclusively by our patients. In the meantime, until that occurs, there are a couple of other options available.

Feel free to park in Lot 16, which is adjacent to the Cancer Center to the north (see map). WMCC has 23 designated parking spots in this lot, specifically for patients/caregivers only. You do not need

a special permit to park in one of these 23 spots. To access Lot 16, take Park Street north to Eleanor Street and turn right. The entrance to the lot is on your right. Specific 'patient only' parking spots are marked with signs.

For those who are able to walk a moderate distance, the nearby Radisson Ramp offers another option for parking.

Once again, please bear with us as we work to provide long-term solutions to the parking issues that have arisen as a result of our increasing patient load.



## Pink Saturdays Returning this Fall

We are extremely pleased to announce that a very important program which provides free screening mammograms to uninsured women in Southwest Michigan will continue this fall. The program, known as Pink Saturdays, has received a significant grant from the Southwest Michigan Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

More than three thousand uninsured women aged 40 to 64 have received free mammograms to screen for breast cancer since 2008 when Pink Saturdays was launched. During that time, ten women were diagnosed by the screening mammograms earlier than they would have been, thus improving their chance of a cure.

Pink Saturdays will relaunch in October, supported by 27 area organizations including hospitals, cancer centers, radiology groups, non-profit groups, foundations and corporations. The goal is to provide a record 1,500 mammograms.

If you or someone you know is uninsured, between the ages of 40 and 64, and has never had breast cancer, please plan to set aside a few hours on a Saturday in October for a free screening mammogram. It's relatively painless, doesn't cost a thing and just may be a lifesaver. After Sept 6th, call 1-800-873-0649 for more information.

## Farewell to Dr. Radha Vemuri

We recently bid sweet farewell to our founding medical director, Dr. Radha Vemuri, during a retirement celebration attended by nearly 300 people.

Dr. Vemuri, who joined WMCC when it opened in 1994, cared for cancer patients in Kalamazoo for 35 years. His compassion and dedication was truly unparalleled. One of his patients, Royce Bland, summed it up this way:

“Dr. Vemuri’s treatment and guidance through my dark days proved to be a personal miracle for me, for which I am forever in his debt.”

The WMCC Board of Directors conferred upon Dr. Vemuri the distinction of Medical Director Emeritus in honor of his outstanding achievements at the Center and his contributions toward improved cancer care for all the patients whose lives he touched.



**WMCC**  
**Main Number**  
**269-382-2500**

Department	Dial	Department	Dial
All Appointments	21	Gynecologic Oncology	
Medical Oncology		Test Results	223
Test Results	221	Prescriptions	233
Prescriptions	231	Nurse	26
Nurse	24	Medical Records & Billing	3
Radiation Oncology			
Test Results	222		
Prescriptions	232		
Nurse	25		

# Program Schedule

Classes listed are offered at no charge to current and former WMCC patients and a caregiver.

## Art As Healing

Date: September 14, six week session  
Time: 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm  
Location: Lower-Level Conference Room

*This art therapy support group is open to newly diagnosed cancer patients currently in treatment. Research suggests that art therapy can reduce a broad spectrum of side effects for cancer patients including stress, anxiety, pain and fatigue. This group focuses on using art to regain independence from the effects of cancer. This is not a professional art course, therefore artistic experience is not needed, nor recommended. Please call Kathleen M. Buday, Expressive Arts Coordinator at Borgess VNA Home Health and Hospice at 1.800.343.1396 or email kathleenbuday@borgess.com to register.*

## Conditioning for Life

Tuesdays 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm  
Wednesdays 9:00 am – 10:00 am  
Fridays 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm  
Location: Lower-Level Fitness Room

*Strength, balance and cardiovascular conditioning can reduce pain, increase energy and improve overall health. The class is led by an exercise physiologist who will help participants adjust the class to fit their ability levels. For more information, call 269.373.0129 or email wellness@wmcc.org.*

## Cooking Class

Date: September 14 (meets quarterly)  
Time: 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm  
Location: 3rd Floor Multi-Purpose Room

*WMCC registered, masters-level clinical dietician discusses seasonal foods and their nutritional benefits for cancer patients. Fall Harvest Recipes will be demonstrated and samples shared with participants. Space is limited, and registration is required. To register, contact the dietician at 269-373-0109 or email nutrition@wmcc.org.*

## FreshStart: Quit Smoking

Date: September 14th, 15th, 21st, 22nd  
Time: 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm  
Location: Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services  
Building at Nazareth, 3299 Gull Road - Conference Room F  
1st wing, 2nd floor  
[www.quitsmokingkalamazoo.com](http://www.quitsmokingkalamazoo.com)

*FreshStart is an educational class to help you **end tobacco use** and promote a healthy lifestyle! It consists of four, one-hour sessions held during a two-week period. Classes are being offered at various locations around Kalamazoo. Each workshop meets twice per week for two weeks. FreshStart is **FREE**, and available to anyone! FreshStart is offered as a partnership between ACS and WMCC. Dates and times are subject to change. Confirmation will be given at time of registration. Please call with any questions or concerns, and to register with the American Cancer Society at 269.349.8719.*

## I Can Cope

Dates: 3rd Tuesday of each month  
Time: 5:15 pm – 6:15 pm  
Location: Lower Level Conference Room

*West Michigan Cancer Center, American Cancer Society, and Leukemia & Lymphoma Society provide collaborative educational programming for patients newly diagnosed or in treatment for cancer care. Facilitated by WMCC licensed masters level social workers, it provides education and support regarding topic specific issues such as coping with cancer, financial resources, nutritional recommendations for cancer patients, and more. Guest speakers are often featured, look for this month's topic on [www.wmcc.org](http://www.wmcc.org). To register or for further information, contact medical social work at 269.384.8629 or email [socialwork@wmcc.org](mailto:socialwork@wmcc.org).*

## Look Good, Feel Better

Dates: 4th Monday of each month  
Time: 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm  
Location: Lower Level Conference Room

*This program provides information and cosmetic advice to women battling cancer. This training includes hands-on instruction on makeup, skin care, wigs, turbans, scarves and nail care. Cosmetics are provided for your personal makeover. This class is sponsored by the American Cancer Society. Call the ACS at 269.349.8719 to register.*

## Prostate Cancer Support Group

Date: 3rd Wednesday of each month  
Time: 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm  
Location: Lower-Level Conference Room

*This group provides support for patients and their caregivers during and after treatment. Each session includes time for conversation and questions in a relaxed, informal atmosphere. Please call Dr. Morry Edwards, Ph.D, at 269.375.2222 or West Michigan Cancer Center at 269.382.2500 to register.*

## Tai Chi

Beginners: Wed. 5:30 pm – 6:45 pm  
Advanced: Tues. 5:30 pm – 6:45 pm  
Location: 3rd Floor Multi-Purpose Room

*Learn Tai Chi for health, to safely improve balance, strength and flexibility, reduce stress, lower blood pressure and increase energy. You do not have to have experience in Tai Chi to attend. For more information, call 269.373.0129 for email [wellness@wmcc.org](mailto:wellness@wmcc.org).*

## Yoga

Dates/Times: Twice weekly  
Mondays 5:30 pm - 6:45 pm  
Thursdays 11:30 am - 12:45 pm  
Location: 3rd Floor Multi Purpose Room

*Yoga is offered as a complementary therapy to empower an individual with techniques to strengthen the body, focus the mind, and calm the spirit. Bring a yoga mat (if you have one), a large firm pillow, and a blanket. For more information, call 269.373.0129 for email [wellness@wmcc.org](mailto:wellness@wmcc.org).*

For more information on any of the classes listed, call 269.373.0129 or send an email to [wellness@wmcc.org](mailto:wellness@wmcc.org). For all classes at West Michigan Cancer Center, please park in the Radisson ramp, and we will validate your ticket. If the class begins at 5:00 pm or later, feel free to park in our main lot.

## WMCC Board of Directors

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## WMCC Sponsors Races



Recently WMCC was a proud sponsor of the Komen Race for the Cure, the Kalamazoo Marathon/Borgess Run for the Health of It, and the ACS Relay for Life. In photo: Lori Yelton, Pam Tibbitts, Megan Hiscock, and Rick Sedlak.

## Save the Date for Summerfest



**Summerfest 2011**  
**WMCC's Annual Patient Picnic**  
Saturday, August 27th at 1pm  
Kindleberger Park in Parchment  
Please RSVP to 269-373-0139.

## Officer Remembered



*Officer Eric Zapata*

WMCC employees, deeply touched by the death of Kalamazoo Public Safety Officer Eric Zapata, raised more than one thousand dollars during a "Wear Blue" fundraiser to support the officer's family. Officer Zapata, who was tragically shot and killed in the line of duty on April 18th, had responded to emergency calls at the Center and become acquainted with several staff members. Donations totaling \$1,015 were collected and sent to the PSO Zapata Memorial Fund at Lake Michigan Credit Union.



## Message from Terry McKay

It was almost 20 years ago that I received a call while working in my hometown of Philadelphia that two hospitals in the Midwest were looking to collaborate on a new cancer center and needed someone to build it. I answered the call and said 'yes.'

Today, after two decades spent in what I consider the most gratifying career

imaginable, I am honored to have worked with such a caring, talented staff to better the lives of cancer patients. Most of all, though, it's all of you—our patients—and your incredible courage, heart and determination to beat cancer that touched me the most. There's nothing like working in a cancer facility to keep you grounded and thankful for every precious day of life.

Author Anais Nin said, "Dreams are necessary to life." Even though I am saying goodbye to West Michigan Cancer Center, I will never stop dreaming and praying for a cure for cancer.

I wish each and every one of you good health and much happiness.

Terry McKay