

Center Stage™

A quarterly publication by West Michigan Cancer Center

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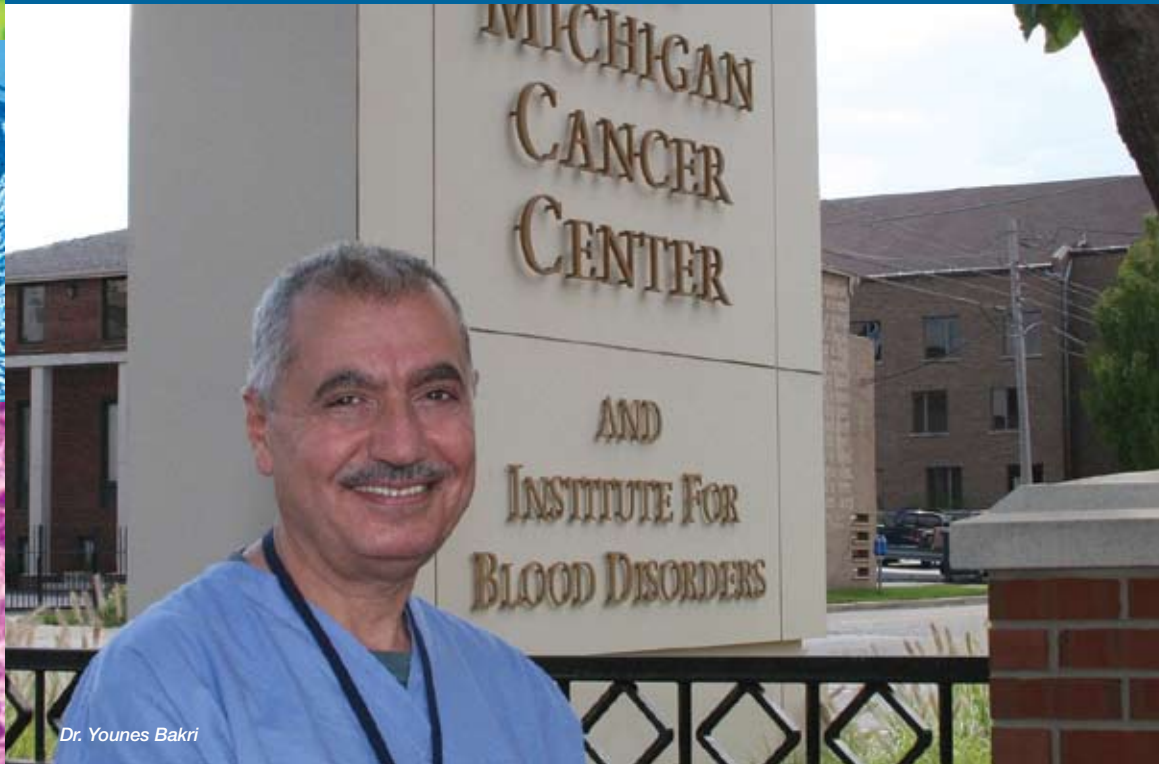
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Dr. Younes Bakri

A Dynamic Program for Gynecologic Malignancies

By Jennifer Cathey

Each year, more than 21,000 American women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer, and more than 11,000 are diagnosed with cervical cancer. Dedicated to being a resource for patients in Kalamazoo and the surrounding communities, West Michigan Cancer Center is home to a comprehensive, leading-edge program specifically focused on the treatment of these gynecologic cancers.

When Younes Noaman Bakri, M.D., FACOG, gynecologic oncologist on the medical staff of West Michigan Cancer Center, first arrived in Kalamazoo, a comprehensive gynecologic oncology program was not yet in place at the Center. Dr. Bakri spent several years building the program from the ground up.

"When I joined West Michigan Cancer Center approximately six years ago, services provided by gynecologic oncologists were not available to area residents," Dr. Bakri says. "The program we created is unique in that our oncologists guide patients through all modalities related to gynecologic cancer, including chemotherapy, radiation therapy, and surgical procedures. This service isn't available in any of the surrounding communities."

Through expansions of services and acquisitions of technology, the program now addresses a full range of gynecologic malignancies, including cancers of the ovaries, endometrium, cervix, vulva, and vagina.

With the addition of Anna V. Hoekstra, M.D., M.P.H., gynecologic oncologist, patients at the Center now have access to a program that is truly all encompassing.

As a native of the Kalamazoo community with family ties in the area that still run deep, Dr. Hoekstra was thrilled to bring her practice to West Michigan Cancer Center after completing intensive fellowship training in gynecologic oncology at Northwestern University.

"I take a holistic approach to treating patients, and that approach fits in well with the philosophy of West Michigan Cancer Center," says Dr. Hoekstra.

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West Michigan Cancer Center  Together, we win.

200 North Park Street Kalamazoo, MI 49007-3731 | Phone 269.382.2500 | www.wmcc.org

Schedule Your Next Appointment Without Even Picking Up the Phone!



At WMCC, we know your time is valuable. How can you fit managing your healthcare into your everyday life? Scheduling appointments, renewing prescriptions, paying your bill... it can all be a lot of work and take a lot of time.

We get it. And we want to help.

That's why we're so excited about our new online option, designed to help you manage your healthcare and communicate with us more quickly, easily and on your schedule. It's called **MyWMCC**, and it is a secure online patient portal. The site offers self-service capabilities for you to manage your healthcare at your fingertips.

Some of the tasks you can accomplish with this new option:

- Complete pre-registration paperwork, including a health questionnaire and intake needs assessment form
- Request appointments*
- Request prescription renewals
- Pay your bill online

This online portal allows us to communicate with you securely via email.

It's quick, and it's easy to sign up: Just log on to our website at www.wmcc.org and click on the **MyWMCC** button in the lower left-hand corner to create your secure, personal account.

We look forward to providing you with this enhanced level of service.

If you're not a computer user, don't worry. You can continue to conduct business with WMCC by phone and regular mail. Using MyWMCC online is optional.

* For same-day appointments, which require immediate attention, please call our office at 269-382-2500. If you have an emergency, please dial "911."



Gifts to Honor

At West Michigan Cancer Center, we celebrate the winter season as a time to embrace hope and goodwill. We remember all those who make it possible to provide quality care to cancer patients throughout Southwest Michigan. We are grateful to our patients, their families and caregivers for the opportunity to share in their journeys.

In celebration of this season of hope, ornaments are hung throughout the Center. Anyone who makes a donation to WMCC has the opportunity to hang an ornament. Hang one to remember someone touched by cancer, someone who helped you in your battle, or someone who is inspirational in your life.

WMCC's annual ornament fundraiser will help build beautiful, inspiring trees and will touch the hearts of many patients and their families who will see them during the holiday season. But more importantly, the financial contributions made to purchase an ornament will provide direct support to WMCC patients through our Patient Care Services Program.

For more information or to make an ornament donation, please contact Jessica Hermann-Wilmarth, Director of Development, at 269-373-0129 or email jwilmarth@wmcc.org.

Summerfest Highlights



Dr. Anna Hoekstra

- continued from cover

"The Center offers a great many resources to physicians and patients. We are also heavily involved in research opportunities and clinical trials through several national organizations, including the Gynecologic Oncology Group. The support structure available here is a benefit to everyone involved."

Dr. Hoekstra's fellowship-level training in robotic surgery will allow for an increased variety of minimally invasive procedures to be performed on eligible patients with gynecologic cancers. During her time at Northwestern University, Dr. Hoekstra completed more than 80 procedures with the da Vinci Surgical System.

"Having someone with such specialized experience in performing surgeries with the da Vinci Surgical System is beneficial to the community, because patients experience less pain and a shorter recovery

period with this technique," Dr. Bakri says. "Open surgical techniques still play a major role in our program, especially in treating ovarian malignancies. With the team completed, however, referring physicians can be assured we have the expertise to provide the best treatment for patients with a variety of conditions."

As a leader in cancer care and a member facility of the National Cancer Institute, West Michigan Cancer Center is dedicated to researching new treatments for cancers. To that end, a wide variety of clinical trials are ongoing at the facility in areas ranging from advanced treatments to new screenings to detect cancer. Physicians wishing to learn more about research and clinical trial opportunities available for gynecologic cancer patients are encouraged to contact West Michigan Cancer Center.

And Then You Live Your Life.



Ann Sachritz

Ann Sachritz has fought and beat cancer. Again. And again. And again. As a three-time cancer survivor, Ann has learned to relish life without dwelling on the past, or living in fear of the future.

Ann learned about her first cancer while living in Nashville in 1979, when a golf-ball-sized tumor emerged and was diagnosed as Hodgkin's Disease. *I will NOT lose my hair*, Ann defiantly declared against her disease as she underwent six months of chemotherapy treatments at a Tennessee hospital. In the end, Ann kept her hair. More happily, the experimental drug preserved her life and, as she would later learn, her ovarian function. Ann hastens to add that her faith in God has been her strength and basis for a confident hope during every battle with cancer.

In 1983 and 1986, Ann gave birth to her daughters. Both were textbook-perfect births following pregnancies with no morning sickness. Ann jokingly reasons that she was spared morning sickness because she had already paid her dues on every treatment day during her chemotherapy. During those days, it was a long drive home with an emesis basin.

Ann remained cancer-free for more than ten years. In 1995, Ann was spending her days corralling preschoolers as a teacher at a private church school. During her annual physical exam, the doctor felt a lump on her throat that was diagnosed as thyroid cancer. Doctors surgically removed the damaged portion of her thyroid and treated her with radioactive iodine in an effort to shrink and kill any cancer cells in her remaining thyroid. Ann's thyroid was ultimately removed. She got back on her feet again after winning round two with cancer, just in time for her husband to pursue an opportunity at First of America Bank in Kalamazoo.

In 1998, Ann had just celebrated her third anniversary of being cancer-free when she faced her biggest challenge ever. Ann had been at her new position at Pharmacia for only a month, when one day, she experienced severe abdominal pains and discovered she was bleeding profusely. "No previous symptoms," she explained to her astonished doctor. Physicians at Bronson Methodist Hospital and West Michigan Cancer Center diagnosed her with advanced colorectal cancer. *Here we go again...round three*, Ann thought, but she found comfort in an assurance she received while praying: *the road may be hard, but everything will turn out fine.*

Ann learned it was a hard road, indeed. To shrink the tumor, her treatment plan required she receive radiation and chemotherapy at the same time. The radiation therapy was more difficult this time, and as Ann describes it now, "It was like I was being sunburned on the inside. There were days I was so sick, I could hardly get out of bed." A complex and delicate surgery was followed by a long and painful recovery.

But from the beginning, Ann was confident in West Michigan Cancer Center, as she explains: "My experience here was night-and-day better than in Tennessee. The hospital there was green and white, with no windows, and a chemo room with 30 people who were all sick at the same time. In Nashville, I felt detached from the staff, but at West Michigan Cancer Center, everyone knows your name. You're not just their '9:00 appointment.' My doctor was marvelous. She didn't talk down to me. She even gave me her cell phone number to call. From the beginning, I knew I was in good hands."

It's been ten happy years since Ann beat her last cancer, and thirty since her first diagnosis. Six years ago, she actually joined the staff of West Michigan Cancer Center to manage its laboratory and help others beat their cancers. What advice does she have for others going through cancer treatment? The same advice that has guided her: "Lean on and draw strength from your faith, family, and friends. Go in with the attitude, I am going to beat this thing. Don't lose your sense of humor; cancer is not an automatic death sentence. On those days you feel like crying, cry. Pray, trust and then, fight to win."

Visit Our Fitness Room

West Michigan Cancer Center is proud to offer a state-of-the-art fitness room for past and present patients, as well as caregivers of those patients.

The fitness room is equipped with cardiovascular machines, a weight machine, and free weights. The cardiovascular machines include two elliptical trainers, two treadmills, and one recumbent bike. More than 40 different exercises can be done on the three-station weight machine. Resistance bands and exercise balls are also available for use.

Fitness programming is available on a regular basis, including instruction from trainers and weight demonstrations. Check out the WMCC calendar for upcoming dates.

Hours for Patients and Caregivers: Monday through Friday

9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

If you are interested in working out at in the fitness room, you must first go through a Wellness Program orientation. The current drop-in orientation dates are as follows:

Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m.

Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m.

Thursdays at 11:00 a.m.

Fridays at 1:00 p.m.

If you are not able to make one of the open orientations, please contact the Wellness Program Coordinator at 269-373-7476.



SAILING IN THE TOPIC OF CANCER

We invite you to view the art exhibit, *Sailing in the Topic of Cancer*, presently on display in the lower level of WMCC.

After being diagnosed with lymphoma late last year, photographer and WMCC patient Bruce Hood decided to create a photo journal to document the various aspects of his cancer journey in a positive way. His intent was to “visualize something that wasn’t frightening but, rather, interesting to look at—the closer you look, the more there is to see.”

Bruce says some of the assembly and creation of the photographs took place during all-day chemo treatment sessions. He adds, “Many of the staff and even some patients and caregivers who saw the project evolving felt that it could speak to others struggling with their own or a loved one’s cancer journey. It encouraged me to explore avenues for a wider exposure for the photographs.”

The exhibit—part of the Art Hop series—is on display through the end of the year. Bruce says he hopes that *Sailing in the Topic of Cancer* will “speak to everyone still searching for their ‘rigging’—patients, caregivers, and people who know someone with cancer.”

Pink Saturdays - A Huge Success



More than 1,200 uninsured women in seven Southwest Michigan counties received free mammograms during the month of October as a result of the Pink Saturdays for the Cure initiative. The Southwest Michigan Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure partnered with the West Michigan Cancer Center and the organizations listed below to bring the free mammogram screening program to the area for the third consecutive year. The cooperative effort was inspired by the low percentage of women in the region receiving annual mammograms and the importance of early detection when treating breast cancer.

Partners in the Pink Saturdays for the Cure 2009 initiative: Borgess Health and its partners; Borgess Medical Center; Borgess-Lee Memorial Hospital; Borgess-Pipp Hospital; Borgess Westside Lab and Radiology; Borgess at Woodbridge Hills; Premier Radiology; Bronson Center for Women; Bronson Diagnostics at Woodbridge/ Bronson Lakeview Hospital; Bronson Vicksburg Hospital; Advanced Radiology Services PC—Kalamazoo Division; Community Hospital; Oaklawn Hospital; Sturgis Hospital; Summit Radiology; Allegan General Hospital; Southwest Michigan Radiology; Lakeland HealthCare; Radiology Associates of Berrien County; Midwestern Pathology; Radiology Consultants PLC; The Cancer Care Center at Battle Creek Health System; Battle Creek Health System; South Haven Community Hospital; Michigan State University-Kalamazoo Center for Medical Studies; West Michigan Cancer Center; the Southwest Michigan Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program and the Southwest Michigan Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

PHONE GUIDE

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		

Fall/Winter Class Schedule

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

Blood Cancers Support Group

Dates: Last Tuesday of each month

Time: 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm

Location: Lower-Level
Conference Room

This support group is for people diagnosed with any blood cancer, including leukemia or lymphoma.

Cooking Class

Dates: 1st Thursday of each month

Time: 4:30 pm – 6:00 pm

Location: WMCC 3rd Floor
Multi-Purpose Room

Monthly topics selected by WMCC Nutritionist Renee Van Wormer, RD, feature foods with significant health benefits. She also shares recipes and samples with participants. Contact Renee at 269-373-0109 to register.

Conditioning for Life

Tuesdays 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Wednesdays 9:00 am – 10:00 am

Location: WMCC 3rd Floor
Multi-Purpose Room

Fridays 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Location: Lower Level
Conference Room

Strength, balance and cardiovascular conditioning can cause dramatic improvements in quality of life. When done correctly, a person 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. It consists of a dynamic warm up, cardiovascular conditioning, strength training, balance and flexibility training using body weight, bands, and stability balls. For more information, contact Maureen Brown at 269-373-7476 or email mbrown@wmcc.org.

Gentle and Restorative Yoga

Dates/Times: Twice weekly

Mondays 5:30 pm – 6:45 pm

Thursdays 11:30 am – 12:45 pm

Location: WMCC 3rd Floor
Multi-Purpose Room

This ongoing yoga exercise program increases general health and stamina, reducing stress and improving strength and balance of all parts of the body. Contact Maureen Brown at 269-373-7476 or email mbrown@wmcc.org.

Look Good, Feel Better

Dates: 4th Monday of each month

Time: 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm

Location: WMCC Lower-Level
Conference Room

The Look Good, Feel Better 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. Call 269-373-7446 to register. This class is sponsored by the American Cancer Society.

My Time Meditation/ Relaxation

Dates: Thursdays

Time: 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm

Location: WMCC Lower-Level
Conference Room

This class is open to beginners, as well as to those with more experience. Ongoing weekly guidance in meditation and relaxation, with time for meditation practice. Come weekly or just drop in whenever you can.

Cancer Survivor Network

Dates: Wednesdays

Time: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Location: Lower-Level
Conference Room

This social networking gathering provides cancer survivors with an opportunity to connect with each other and discuss the challenges and successes of their cancer experience. Led by Samantha Rowland, the group is facilitated by a peer survivor through the WMCC Volunteer Program. This group is provided with periodic consults with WMCC's medical social worker.

Pilates Ball Class

Dates: Wednesdays

Time: 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm Drop-in

Location: WMCC 3rd Floor
Multi-Purpose Room

Participants will need to bring their own ball. Using a ball as part of a fitness program can accommodate a wide range of difficulty levels, each requiring support from the back and stomach muscles, which help firm up the trunk muscles in the body.

Prostate Cancer Support Group

Dates: 3rd Wednesday of each month

Time: 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

This group meets for support and information regarding prostate cancer. Please call Dr. Morry Edwards, Ph.D., at 269-375-2222

Tai Chi

Beginners: Wed. 5:30 pm – 6:45 pm

Advanced: Tues. 5:30 pm – 6:45 pm

Location: WMCC 3rd Floor
Multi-Purpose Room

Tai Chi is an ancient Chinese form of exercise. It is designed to provide relaxation in the process of body conditioning. Call Maureen Brown at 269-373-7476 or email mbrown@wmcc.org to register.

For more information on any of the classes listed, call 269-373-7476 or send an email to wellness@wmcc.org. Call the social worker at 269-373-7446 or email socialworker@wmcc.org. For all classes at West Michigan Cancer Center, please park in the Radisson ramp, and we will validate your ticket.

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Standing Together Makes Us Stronger

Fighting cancer is a task too difficult to tackle alone. That's why the area's two preeminent hospitals created West Michigan Cancer Center. For more than 15 years, Borgess Medical Center and Bronson Methodist Hospital have worked together to make West Michigan Cancer Center one of the most technologically advanced cancer treatment centers in the world. Their shared vision was to create an unrivaled cancer care resource for the southwest Michigan community. Their commitment, then and continuing today, is to provide the best possible care that technology and expertise will permit.

Their earliest collaborations recognized the value of multidisciplinary treatment teams, an approach practiced at Mayo Clinic, to optimize treatment outcomes and improve the patient experience. From the

beginning, the best technology was made possible by combining the two hospitals' financial clout. The recent purchase of a TomoTherapy Hi-Art Treatment System demonstrates the continued leadership of the organizations to fulfill their original pledge to the community.

Bronson and Borgess are standing together to provide the best available cancer treatment resources and ensure that our community is stronger, healthier, and safer. These great teaching hospitals continue to combine their energy, intellect, and financial resources to meet the community's needs for exceptional cancer care.

When we stand together, we win.



Bronson Methodist Hospital

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A Borgess | Bronson Collaboration

Borgess Medical Center