Bridget VandenBussche Embraces New WMCC Leadership Role

It could have all turned out differently for Bridget VandenBussche, had it not been for a small, Oregon-based consulting group with interesting healthcare clients. VandenBussche, who ‘loves numbers’, had just graduated from Michigan State University with a degree in accounting and an eye on becoming a certified public accountant when the call came. The consulting group wanted her to sign on to do data analysis. “I went on site with them as they did consulting work in operating and emergency rooms and outpatient practices,” she said. “As soon as I stepped foot into the realm of healthcare, it was a done deal for me.”

That first post-college job led to roles at Pfizer and Borgess Medical Center where VandenBussche worked on quality improvement initiatives as an analyst and project leader. In 2011, she joined WMCC in a similar role and ultimately became director of quality improvement / risk. Earlier this year, VandenBussche was named interim executive director. “It is truly an honor and a privilege to participate in the big decisions that improve care for our cancer and hematology patients,” she said. “Our staff works so hard to provide exceptional, compassionate care, and when patients stop me to tell me what a great job our teams are doing, that is just confirmation.”

VandenBussche’s appointment comes at an important stage in the WMCC timeline with medical oncology and infusion services moving to partner hospitals Borgess and Bronson by January 2021. She wants patients to know that she is committed to making the transition as seamless as possible for them. “I think the best thing is that the amazing medical oncologists who are treating them today will continue to treat them,” VandenBussche stated. “We’re going to be in different buildings but to me, that continuity of care and that collaboration won’t change.”

WMCC Board Chairman John Hayden said the decision to promote VandenBussche made perfect sense. “Bridget has a deep knowledge of WMCC, based on her experience in quality and risk,” said Hayden. “She is an ideal fit to lead the organization into the next decade as treatment options for cancer and blood disorders evolve with our changing healthcare landscape.”

Once the transition takes place in 2021, VandenBussche will oversee the reconfigured operation that will continue to serve patients at 200 North Park Street. “The demand for radiation therapy, surgery and gynecologic oncology services continues to grow and I embrace the opportunity to work on our center’s long-term strategy to serve this community’s needs,” she added. “Change is always scary and it’s always hard and there are a lot of things we just do not know yet. I get many questions and I just do not have all the answers yet. However, I am incredibly passionate and dedicated to ensuring this is as smooth as it can be for our patients.”
Meet Our New Providers

West Michigan Cancer Center & Institute for Blood Disorders (WMCC), a collaboration of Ascension Borgess and Bronson Healthcare Group, is pleased to announce the addition of two providers.

**DANIEL CHAMBERLAIN, MD,** is WMCC's new division chief of radiation oncology. Dr. Chamberlain has 14 years’ experience in clinical and academic medicine, most recently as a faculty member at Banner MD Anderson Cancer Center in Gilbert, AZ. Prior to his work there, he served as clinical director of radiation oncology at the Greenwich campus of the Yale Smilow Cancer Center in Greenwich, CT. Dr. Chamberlain earned his medical degree from the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York City. He completed a medical/surgical internship at Mayo Clinic Arizona in Scottsdale and a residency in radiation oncology at Yale University School of Medicine through Yale New Haven Hospital in New Haven, CT. Dr. Chamberlain is board certified in radiation oncology and specializes in lung cancer, breast cancer, lymphoma, brain tumors and head & neck cancers.

**BRANDON MANCINI, MD, MBA,** is a board certified radiation oncologist and Michigan native who joined WMCC after two years as medical director at Mercy Health Lacks Cancer Center in Grand Rapids. During his time there, Dr. Mancini also served as a clinical assistant professor in the department of radiation oncology through the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Dr. Mancini earned his medical degree from Wayne State University in Detroit and completed an internship and residency in radiation oncology from Yale-New Haven Hospital in New Haven, CT. He specializes in gastrointestinal cancers, prostate cancer, breast cancer, gynecologic cancers and lymphoma.

**WMCC Radiation Oncology Program Awarded Reaccreditation**

WMCC’s radiation oncology program has been awarded a three-year reaccreditation by the American College of Radiation Oncology (ACRO). ACRO conducted a peer review of our practice, which included a two-day site visit. The review included a detailed investigation of administrative, medical, and physics procedures. Medical charts, treatment planning, simulation, treatment delivery, physics calibration procedures, quality assurance, radiation safety, staffing and the physical plant were reviewed and observed. The review went well and WMCC received a three-year reaccreditation.

**YOUR NEXT VISIT**

**What You Need to Know**

**Text Message Appointment Reminders**

These are now sent to patients who have opted in on their cell phones. Reminder texts go out four days ahead of time with the option to confirm or cancel the upcoming appointment. If you do not choose either option, you will receive a second reminder text two days before your appointment. Phone call reminders continue to go out as well.

**Patient Check Out—Update**

From now on, please check out with a scheduler after your office visit so you can set your next appointment date and time. Please keep your pager with you and check out with a scheduler at the front desk of the floor where you were seen. If the scheduler is occupied, please take a seat in the lobby until you are called up. The scheduler will try to accommodate your future appointment requests.
When patients hear a diagnosis of cancer, they believe one of the necessary forms of fighting the disease will involve sitting for hours in an infusion chair connected to bags of chemotherapy drugs. With the help of clinical trials and research, that path has changed, especially in the last 10 years. The emergence of oral therapy in lieu of infusion therapy has gained significant ground and now accounts for roughly 25% of our patients’ treatment plans. WMCC has recognized the progress made and invested time and resources to develop an oral chemotherapy/immunotherapy service line. This group of professionals includes a dedicated oncology certified nurse whose job is to coordinate and educate patients and caregivers on how to safely take these medications in pill form and how to adhere to important guidelines. An onsite retail pharmacy is staffed with a pharmacist and pharmacy tech, who are both trained in the management of these specialty medications. And, a patient financial counselor is on the team to help navigate the coverage and co-pays associated with this form of treatment. Our team is ready to help you on your journey.
UPCOMING WELLNESS DATES
Available at no charge to patients newly-diagnosed, in treatment and up to three years’ post-treatment. Check wmcc.org for specific dates and times.

Survivorcise 12-week session
Summer
Date: July 2 – September 19, 2019
Every Tuesday & Thursday
Time: 1:00 – 2:00 pm
Place: YMCA, 1001 W. Maple Street, Kalamazoo
Register: 269-373-7456 or survivorcise@wmcc.org

Livestrong at the YMCA 12-week session
Date: Begins August 12, 2019
Every Monday & Wednesday
Time: 6:00 – 7:15 pm
Place: YMCA 2900 W. Centre Ave. | Portage, MI
Register: Trish Harrison taharr@kzooymca.org or 269-459-4881

CALL YOUR NURSE DIRECTLY
Monday through Friday – 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

Medical Oncology
Physician Nurse Liaison Phone
Dr. Bivins ................. Deonna K. ................. 269-373-7402
Dr. Hameed .............. Erica P. ................. 269-384-8604
Dr. Issa .................. Sherri T. ................. 269-384-8671
Dr. Mohamed ........... Cindy K. ................. 269-373-7496
Dr. Nagpal ............. Remie M. ................. 269-373-7467
Dr. Omaire ............. Anne P. ................. 269-384-7469
Dr. Thakur ............... Brenda B. ................. 269-373-0107
Dr. Tokala .............. Karen R. ................. 269-384-8638
Dr. Usman .............. Heather M. ................. 269-384-8636
Oral
Chemotherapy .......... Snezana K. ................. 269-373-7494

Radiation Oncology
Physician Nurse Liaison Phone
Dr. Chamberlain ...... Rachel W. ................. 269-373-7444
Dr. Mancini .......... Holly S. ................. 269-373-7426
Dr. Mislimani .......... Beth S. ................. 269-384-8685
Dr. Radawski .......... Tabitha P. ................. 269-384-8616

Gynecologic Oncology
Physician Nurse Liaison Phone
Dr. Hay ................ Lisa P. ................. 269-373-7451
Dr. Hoekstra .......... Grace C. ................. 269-373-7466
Dr. Mize ................. Sarah T. ................. 269-384-8637

Neuro Oncology
Physician Nurse Liaison Phone
Dr. Bivins ................. Deonna K. ................. 269-373-7402

Surgical Oncology
Physician Nurse Liaison Phone
Dr. Munene .......... Eleanor B. ................. 269-384-8663

Hemophilia Clinic
Physician Nurse Liaison Phone
Dr. Usman ................. Jennifer L. ................. 269-373-0106
Nancy I. ................. 269-373-7479

Additional Support
Department/Phone
Billing 269-585-6713
Dietitian 269-382-2500
Genetic Counseling 269-384-8683
Medical Records 269-585-6714
Phone Triage Line 269-373-7472
Social Work 269-382-2500
Volunteer Services 269-373-7434

For urgent needs during regular business hours, call the Phone Triage Line at 269-373-7472

AFTER HOURS
After 5 pm on weekdays, weekends & holidays Call 269-382-2500
Our answering service will contact the on-call doctor and he or she will return your call as soon as possible.
Denise Franklin takes her treatment for breast cancer very seriously. Herself...not so much. Visit the cancer center on a Thursday and you will likely spot a couple of ‘characters’ from Portage in the infusion room. That would be Franklin and her caregiver/sidekick for that day’s appointment. Perhaps, dressed as the Red Riding Hood and the Big Bad Wolf. Or, as the newest additions to the Portage Central football and cheerleading squads. Or even as a damsel in distress and a musketeer. “Music, laughter and comedy are the things that get me through the day,” said Franklin. “I try to dress up for every one of my chemo appointments. Sometimes, I plan ahead, and other times, it’s totally a last minute decision!”

A single, working mother with three sons, Franklin’s journey with cancer began in early 2017 following a mammogram to investigate a lump she had first noticed months earlier. Biopsies showed that she had two different types of cancer in one of her breasts that would require chemotherapy, surgery and radiation treatment. Franklin prepared herself to endure the necessary treatments. What she could not prepare for was the sudden loss of not just one but both of her parents. “I lost my dad around the time between my surgery and radiation treatments, and then my mom after radiation,” she said. “That was such a difficult time.”

Franklin relied on the support of her boyfriend and her sons, ages 21, 18 and 15 to help her through the challenging days and weeks that followed. She also made strong connections with WMCC staff and volunteers who she says showed her tremendous compassion. “I love the Thursday volunteers, Robert and Alan,” said Franklin. “I’ve connected so much with them that I schedule all my infusion appointments on Thursdays—and they had better not take the day off!”

That is how Denise Franklin rolls. Jokes, grins and even costumes and characters to immerse herself in to beat away whatever blues might creep into her consciousness. She is a survivor.

YOU’RE INVITED

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2019

‘Healthy Weight and Cancer Survivorship’

An event for cancer survivors & their guests

Ascension Borgess Hospital
Lawrence Education Center
1521 Gull Road
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Dinner & Presentation
5:30 pm to 7:30 pm

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Timothy Jordan, M.Ed., PhD
Director of Research and Program Evaluation
The Center for Health and Successful Living
University of Toledo College of Health and Human Services

Stuart Verseman, MD
Bariatric Surgeon
Ascension Medical Group

Space is limited. Registration begins 8/1/19 at any one of the following:
Online – https://whoozin.com/wmcc  Email – cthomas@wmcc.org  Phone – 269-373-7456
These gifts were given between October 16, 2018 and April 30, 2019.
YOUR DONATIONS MAKING AN IMPACT

Appreciation comes in many forms. Many patients or families express gratitude for their care at WMCC through generous financial contributions. A few of programs that these contributions impact include:

The Roy McEachern Comfort Cart: This is a daily service that provides warm blankets, books, magazines, games, nourishment and even sometimes a treat to the patients receiving treatments. In many cases, a friendly conversation with the WMCC volunteers is also included!

Survivorcise class: This is an exercise class and support group rolled into one and designed especially for people who have completed their cancer treatment.

Quality Care: Every patient at WMCC receives the care they need regardless of ability to pay. We believe that everyone should have access to our high quality, innovative cancer or blood disorder treatment.

Every dollar donated makes it possible for WMCC to continue to provide quality care to each and every patient that we serve. WMCC is grateful and appreciative of your generosity.
Free Help to Quit Smoking & Tobacco:

Freshstart®

If you smoke or use tobacco, you have probably tried to quit or at least thought about it. You know what a drag it is on your health. It can lead to disease, harm almost every organ in your body, and is the number one cause of preventable death. Yet, the truth is, the nicotine in tobacco is addictive and just plain hard to give up.

Here’s an option to try and it’s completely free: The American Cancer Society’s Freshstart Smoking & Tobacco Cessation program. The program uses behavior modification over four separate sessions in a two-week period. Each class has a topic and focus for discussion.

The four sessions are:

• Session 1—Understanding Why You Have an Addiction and How to Quit
• Session 2—Mastering the First Few Days
• Session 3—Mastering Obstacles
• Session 4—Staying Quit and Enjoying it Forever

Classes are held in a group format at four Bronson Healthcare locations in Southwest Michigan—Kalamazoo, Battle Creek, Paw Paw and South Haven. This class format provides you with the professional assistance, group discussions, tips and encouragement from other smokers. Anyone who is interested in quitting tobacco can enroll at no charge—you don’t have to be a cancer patient.

For more information and class dates, call 269-341-7723.

COPING TOGETHER

New Monthly Support Group!

Next Session: July 17, 2019
Third Wednesday of each month

Where: WMCC Administrative Office
346 W. Michigan Avenue,
Kalamazoo, 2nd Floor –
Above First National Bank
Park in lot behind bank on
Water Street

Time: 5:00 – 6:15 pm

Who: WMCC cancer patients
in active treatment or
within 6 months post treatment

Facilitators: WMCC social workers
Light refreshments will be served
and RSVP requested.
Email socialwork@wmcc.org
or call 269-384-8629.
After an incredible 51-year career in hematology and oncology, Dr. Muhammad Rafi retired from WMCC on June 4. He recently reflected on his calling to medicine, the revolutionary changes in cancer treatment over the past several decades and his plans in retirement.

On his work, which he calls a 'gift'
“I graduated from medical school in 1968…so it’s been a 51-year journey. I have always considered the ability to come to work as a gift, and it is not given to everyone. I have done my best to honor it and to enjoy it. This gift to work, along with all my teammates, helped me to do things as an individual that I could not have done otherwise. We were able to do things together that were bigger than ourselves and to help patients and families in the utmost way possible.”

“I think to see patients afflicted with life threatening diseases and to recover after chemotherapy and or radiation was a remarkable experience and that led me to go into oncology and hematology.”

– Dr. Muhammad Rafi

On what led him to oncology when he first began practicing in late 60’s and early 70’s
“When I was in training there were only a few effective treatments, for Hodgkin’s disease and childhood leukemia. Doctors were also making curative progress in testicular cancer. But, we were not making much progress at the time with breast cancer and other solid tumor cancers. I think to see patients

On the changes in cancer treatment
“There have been remarkable changes in treating breast cancer and lung cancer. In 1968 if you had lung cancer, they really could not do much for you and survival was six months or less. I think if you look at all the data, it shows there have been marked improvements in cancer survival, especially in the past few years. There have been ramped-up genetic discoveries and many new drugs have become available. I think we are at the threshold in oncology where in the next several years, we will be using less and less chemotherapy and more and more immunotherapy or targeted therapy, which could be in the form of pills. That will mean fewer side effects and nobody losing their hair, along with a much better quality of life.”

On the future of cancer treatment
“I am excited about our accumulating knowledge about genes and how they are identified for each and every cancer. Or, sometimes more than one gene in one cancer. The pharmaceutical companies are looking for compounds that can help prevent genetic changes. Cancer is nothing but a disease of the genes. If we can find out which gene is causing the problem, and we can take care of it, that is ideal. Case in point, chronic myelogenous leukemia. Thirty years ago, it was incurable. Now with the help of a pill, many patients are able to even stop treatment.”

On his retirement plans
“Although I’m a bit apprehensive about retirement and what I’m going to do afterward, I have memories of many of my patients who have made compromises in their lives. There is no training for retirement. Summer is wonderful in Michigan and I’ll do some yard work, a little kayaking… reading books…seeing and working with our grandchildren. I have two now and one on the way. So that’s going to keep us busy. I have no big trips planned…we will see how time goes.”

WMCC Bids Farewell to Dr. Rafi

Dr. Rafi with his oncology nurse liaison, Heather, on his last day at WMCC.
TICKETS ARE SOLD OUT

STRIKE OUT CANCER NIGHT
JULY 13TH – HOMER STRYKER FIELD – 7:05PM

TICKETS ARE SOLD OUT

RAFFLE!  JERSEY AUCTION!  +MORE!

SEE YOU AT THE BALLPARK!

PRESENTED BY:

riverrunpress  HAPMAN
Ideas that move:

a iMGlobal.com,pany
We are pleased to provide you with the Medfusion Patient Portal, self-service online tools that let you interact with our practice where and when it fits your busy schedule.

- Ask scheduling questions or request changes
- Ask a nurse
- Pay bills online
- Receive lab results and office updates
- Submit non-urgent health questions
- Access from your mobile device

To create an account, call us at 269-373-7497 or stop by our front desk.