When Art Green learned in the fall of 2019 that he had prostate cancer, he recalled a conversation with a friend who had been treated for the same disease. “It seemed like he had a lot of side effects from radiation treatment,” said Green, who at age 81, was hoping for a better outcome. Fortunately for him, the timing was better. Green was referred to Julie Brownell, DO, a urologist at Bronson Urology and Continence Specialists. Dr. Brownell explained that he was a candidate for a new, minimally invasive procedure before starting radiation therapy that could help reduce side effects. It’s called SpaceOAR™ Hydrogel. “We try very hard to minimize side effects from radiation therapy like rectal pain, bleeding and chronic diarrhea,” said Brandon Mancini, MD, the WMCC radiation oncologist who treated Green. “Studies have shown that SpaceOAR™ significantly reduces the adverse effects from radiation in two thirds of patients,” added Dr. Mancini. “Since starting the program here, our patients have reported better quality of life after treatment.”

Here’s how it works. When treating cancer patients with radiation therapy, the goal is to kill the cancer cells while avoiding damage to surrounding healthy tissue. The prostate is next to the rectum and naturally separated by a small space. Due to the close proximity, prostate radiation therapy can unintentionally cause damage to the rectum. That can lead to issues with bowel function. To reduce this risk, SpaceOAR™ Hydrogel is implanted by a urologist in an outpatient setting prior to the start of radiation treatment. Robert Isacksen, MD., a urologist at Bronson Urology and Continence Specialists, has performed the procedure on several prostate cancer patients including Green. “By acting as a protective spacer, the hydrogel temporarily moves the rectum away from the prostate,” said Dr. Isacksen. “SpaceOAR™ Hydrogel reduces the radiation dose delivered to the rectum and may eliminate or decrease damage.”

Dr. Mancini says almost every prostate cancer patient who has elected to receive radiation therapy is a candidate for the procedure. Green, a retired GM tool and die maker who lives in Galesburg with his wife, Betty, finished a 5-day course of radiation therapy in December and said he ‘feels great’. “I experienced a tiny bit of discomfort with the procedure and some fatigue after radiation but I expected that, “he added. “I’m back taking yoga classes with my wife, who is also a cancer survivor.”
Now that we have ushered in a new year and a new decade, we are pleased to announce that WMCC is offering a full slate of supportive programs for patients this year.

**ART THERAPY***

We are excited to offer three unique group programs this year: 1) An art therapy-based workshop at the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts (KIA) for survivors who have completed treatment, once per month for three months; 2) A one-day art therapy session at WMCC for children of cancer patients; 3) A six-session, bi-weekly art therapy group at WMCC for active and newly-diagnosed patients.

**ADVANCE CARE PLANNING SEMINARS***

Patients and caregivers can learn how to create an advance directive document that details their desired plan of care. Sessions will be held quarterly.

**MASSAGE THERAPY***

Patients receiving infusion treatments can receive hand, foot and cranial massage from a certified massage therapist on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

**PATIENT FINANCIAL COUNSELING/EXPANDED ASSISTANCE**

Our financial counselors can help patients explore insurance benefits, enrollments, grants, free medication and co-pay assistance and more.

**PRESCRIPTION DELIVERY TO INFUSION ROOM**

Medications prescribed by our providers can be filled on site at our retail pharmacy and delivered directly to the infusion room while patients receive treatment.

**SUPPORT GROUPS***

‘Coping Together’, our monthly support group for patients currently in treatment for recurrent or metastatic cancer or up to six months post treatment is returning, this month. Many topics are covered. Camaraderie and a meal is shared amongst the group.

**SURVIVOR EVENT***

To celebrate National Cancer Survivor Day on Sunday, June 7th, WMCC will host patients and their families at the Kalamazoo Growlers’ baseball complex for an afternoon game. Mark your calendar now and save the date!

**WELLNESS CLASSES***

We continue to offer two exercise programs, Survivorcise™, through Ascension Borgess Health & Fitness Center and the YMCA, and LIVESTRONG at the YMCA. Upcoming class dates and details can be found on page 7.

Information on specific class dates for our new art therapy workshops, advance care planning seminars and support groups will be posted at WMCC, on our website at wmcc.org and on Facebook throughout the year.

*Supported by generous donations to WMCC’s Patient Care Services & Survivorship Fund. Program may include eligibility requirements and capacity limits. For questions, contact the medical social work team by email at: socialwork@wmcc.org or by phone at: 269-384-8629.

As we announced more than a year ago, preparations for the transition of medical oncology services to our partner hospitals, Ascension Borgess and Bronson, continue at WMCC. Bronson announced in March of last year that it is building a new cancer pavilion and recently, Ascension Borgess made a similar announcement and shared details about the new cancer center they are building. While we work with each healthcare system to prepare for the transition of medical oncology services in 2021, the day to day business of caring for patients with cancer and blood disorders continues uninterrupted. Once the transition of medical oncology services eventually takes place, we look forward to continuing to provide excellent, state-of-the-art radiation oncology, gynecologic oncology and surgical oncology services to residents of Southwest Michigan.

Communication during the transition

We will make sure to keep you and your family informed. We will provide plenty of notice well in advance of changes involving medical oncology and infusion services. You can count on us to make sure any changes we make are in the interest of improving care coordination and services you receive from us.
PARTICIPANTS SOUGHT for CLINICAL TRIALS

Our research department is currently seeking participants for three different clinical trials—two involving breast cancer and one involving prostate cancer. Specifically, we are recruiting:

- Healthy women ages 45-74 for a breast cancer screening trial called TMIST
- Women who have completed treatment for stage II-III breast cancer within the last 14 months for a weight loss study
- Men who are working and have been diagnosed with prostate cancer and are scheduled for radiation therapy or surgery within the next few months

If you or someone you know is interested, please contact our research department by email at: research@wmcc.org or call 269-373-7443.
These donations were given between May 1, 2019 and December 14, 2019.
In memory of Linda Darr
Mr. and Mrs. Scott P. Shelton
Ms. Elana Sullivan
Ms. Kelly Dryer
Ms. Osullivan
Mr. and Mrs. Fausey
Mr. and Mrs. Wilson
Ms. Guritz
Mrs. and Mr. Walden
In memory of Lloyd Ludwig
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Ms. Nichole Kirchner
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Local Union 131 IBEW
In memory of William Braybrooks
Ms. Joyce Berty

Honoring the Care She Received

She was only 37 years old when she got the diagnosis no one ever wants to hear. Latrieva Boston had stage 2 breast cancer.

The news took Boston by surprise because she ‘practiced healthy lifestyle habits.’ She told her doctor that she ate well and worked out. But Boston knew something wasn’t right when she felt a painful lump in her breast and some nausea. The day she was diagnosed with cancer, she vowed to fight the disease. Boston said she told herself, “I’m not prepared to leave my family.” After surgical intervention and radiation, Boston went into remission. “I tried to maintain a positive attitude, I think that’s imperative,” she said.

More than four years later, Boston reached out to WMCC because she wanted to give back. “I had a great experience at WMCC and wanted to help out with funding patient programming,” she said. In October, Boston and her family put together a brunch at the VFW in Kalamazoo. Surrounded by friends, family and veterans, the brunch raised almost $600 to support WMCC. “The brunch was held to support patients who find their disease in a later stage, don’t have the family support I had and are struggling financially. That is why I did this and I hope to do it again in the future.”

Venessa Collins-Smith with her daughter Latrieva Boston.
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
Date: April 7 – June 25, 2020
Every Tuesday & Thursday
Time: 1:00 – 2:00 pm
Place: YMCA
1001 W. Maple Street, Kalamazoo
Register: Carla Thomas
269-373-7456 or survivorcise@wmcc.org

LIVESTRONG at the YMCA
12-week session
Date: April 13 – July 1, 2020
Every Monday & Wednesday
Time: 5:30 – 6:45 pm
Place: YMCA
1001 W. Maple Street, Kalamazoo
Register: Rebecca Lillie
269-459-4839 or rlillie@kzooymca.org

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

Medical Oncology
Physician      | Nurse Liaison | Phone
Dr. Bivins     | Deonna K.     | 269-373-7402
Dr. Hameed     | Snezana K.    | 269-384-8604
Dr. Issa       | Sherrie T.    | 269-384-8671
Dr. Mohamed    | Cindy K.      | 269-373-7496
Dr. Nagpal     | Nancy W.      | 269-373-7467
Dr. Omaia      | Anne P.       | 269-373-7469
Dr. Thakur     | Brenda B.     | 269-373-0107
Dr. Tokala     | Karen R.      | 269-384-8638
Dr. Usman      | Heather M.    | 269-384-8636

Radiation Oncology
Physician      | Nurse Liaison | Phone
Dr. Chamberlain| Rachel W.     | 269-373-7444
Dr. Mancini    | Kevin K.      | 269-373-7426
Dr. Mislmani   | 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

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.
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Save the Date!

STRIKE OUT CANCER EVENT
at the Kalamazoo Growlers!
National Cancer Survivors Day
Sunday, June 7, 2020
1:05 pm
Homer Stryker Field / Kalamazoo
Details coming soon!