**HEREDITARY CANCER EXPERT TO SPEAK IN KALAMAZOO**

*Kalamazoo, MI* – Who is most at risk for colon cancer? And, to what extent does a person’s family history play a role? Those are key questions that noted cancer expert Dr. Henry Lynch will explore when he addresses members of the Kalamazoo medical community and the general public on March 8 and 9.

Dr. Lynch is internationally renowned for his research on the link between heredity and certain cancers. He is coming to Kalamazoo at the invitation of three area coalitions which have joined forces to raise colorectal cancer awareness—the Kalamazoo Colorectal Cancer Awareness Network (KCRAN), the Calhoun County Cancer Control Coalition (5Cs) and the Cancer Control Coalition of Southwest Michigan (CCCSWM).

(Quote from Drs about how exciting it is to have Dr. Lynch here)

Dr. Lynch will be the keynote speaker at a free continuing medical education (CME) event for healthcare providers on Friday, March 8. The CME program begins at 2:30 with dinner at 5:30 pm, followed by Dr. Lynch’s presentation. He is also slated to speak on Saturday, March 9, at a health care conference which is open to the general public. That event begins at 9:00 am, with a complimentary lunch at noon, followed by Dr. Lynch’s talk. Both events will take place at the Gilmore Center for Health Education at Bronson Methodist Hospital and registration is recommended. Contact Marybeth Peters at 269-373-7450 or email her at mpeters@wmcc.org to register.

The coalitions are also spearheading an initiative to provide free screening colonoscopies to 50 uninsured area residents in the second year of a program called “Blue Ribbon Days”.

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer in men and women and the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the US. Through screening tests, colon polyps can be found early and removed before they become cancerous. Most people don’t know they have colon polyps which is why doctors recommend that people begin screening at age 50. African Americans are at a higher risk and should
begin screening at age 45. Other factors that increase a person’s risk for colorectal cancer include being overweight, a diet high in fat and low in fiber, having Crohn’s disease and having a personal or family history of certain cancers. They include colon, uterine and ovarian cancers as well as hereditary cancer syndromes like Lynch syndrome—named for Dr. Lynch—and familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP).

Partners in the community colon cancer screening awareness campaign include: American Cancer Society, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Borgess Medical Center, Bronson Methodist Hospital, Calhoun County Cancer Control Coalition, Cancer Control Coalition of Southwest Michigan, Endoscopy and Surgery Center of Woodbridge Hills, Family Health Center, Bronson Gastroenterology Portage, Kalamazoo Anesthesiology, Kalamazoo Colorectal Cancer Awareness Network (KCRAN), Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services, Kalamazoo Endo Center, Kalamazoo Gastroenterology Hepatology, LifeLinc Anesthesia, Lynch Syndrome International, OptiMed Pharmacy, West Michigan Cancer Center and the Western Michigan University School of Medicine.

ABOUT WMCC
Founded in 1994 as collaboration between Borgess Health and Bronson Methodist Hospital, WMCC offers comprehensive, multidisciplinary, integrative cancer treatment in a four-floor, 55,000 square feet facility located at 200 North Park Street in downtown Kalamazoo. Today, the WMCC averages nearly 100,000 patient visits a year by Southwest Michigan residents.

Service offerings include radiation therapy, diagnostic imaging including the PET/CT scan, medical oncology, gynecologic oncology and neuro oncology, laboratory services, pharmacy services, genetic counseling, social and psychological services, support services including tai chi, yoga, massage and nutrition/cooking classes, financial counseling, homercare and transportation services, hospice, and a resource center. The center is also home to the Breast Cancer Clinic & Neuro-Oncology Clinic, a multidisciplinary treatment approach for patients with a new diagnosis of breast or brain cancer and hosts other tumor-specific comprehensive conferences and clinics.

Staff includes medical oncology physicians, radiation oncology physicians, gynecologic oncology physicians, pharmacists, physicists, radiation therapists, oncology certified nurses and support staff. A CEO/CMO and a board of trustees of community and medical leaders make up the leadership team. WMCC is an NCI-designated Community Clinical Oncology Program and conducts NCI-sponsored clinical trials.

WMCC is one of the first oncology practices in the nation to be recognized by the Quality Oncology Practice Initiative (QOPI®) Certification Program, an affiliate of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO). The Center is also accredited by the Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons, the American College of Radiation Oncology, the American College of Radiology Imaging Network and the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers.