Progress in the early detection and treatment of cancer means that more people than ever before are turning the chapter on their disease and entering a new phase as ‘survivors’. This is wonderful news. Yet, we know that life after a cancer diagnosis can sometimes present physical and emotional challenges. It’s not unusual to complete all or the majority of your treatment and have concerns about lingering side effects or other healthcare issues. To address concerns like these, the West Michigan Cancer Center has opened a new Survivorship Clinic.

The Survivorship Clinic is a customized, follow-up program for cancer survivors. Patients in the program receive careful monitoring for a possible return of their cancer, as well as help with side effects and other issues. We’ve assembled a team of experts in cancer care and survivorship to address our patients’ unique needs. Common issues following treatment can include pain, difficulty coping, fatigue and sleep problems, family concerns, sexual side effects, financial woes and emotional adjustment, among other complications.

At the first Survivorship Clinic visit, a mid-level provider—usually a physician assistant or nurse practitioner—meets with the patient to assess his or her specific needs and develop a plan of care. This appointment is billed through the patient’s insurance company as a normal visit to WMCC known as an ‘office visit’. Services provided by the Survivorship Clinic’s social workers, dieticians and financial counselors are offered at no charge.

We are beginning our Survivorship Clinic on a small scale. Sanya Kaluza, MD, a medical oncologist, will assume the role of Survivorship Clinic Director when she joins WMCC in September. We are also hiring a mid-level provider to work with Dr. Kaluza. The first round of patients we’ve identified for a clinic visit are breast cancer survivors. If you’re a breast cancer survivor and you have concerns you’d like to address, please contact our Survivorship Clinic at 269-384-8620 for more information or to schedule a visit.

Sincerely,
Joseph Mirro, MD
President and CEO/CMO
WMCC Adds Gynecologic Oncologist & Genetic Counselor

Angela Caffrey, MD, is a board-certified gynecologic oncologist. Dr. Caffrey comes from Eugene, Oregon where she cared for patients at Willamette Valley Cancer Institute. Prior to that, she was an Assistant Professor in the Department of Gynecology and Obstetrics at Loma Linda University Medical Center in California. Dr. Caffrey provides comprehensive consultation and treatment for all female genital cancers.

Carol Christianson, MS, CGC, is a board-certified Genetic Counselor. She sees patients in our Cancer Genetics Program who are at increased risk to have a hereditary cancer syndrome. Christianson has 26 years of experience, most recently serving as a genetic counselor and genetic education specialist at the Center for Biotechnology, Genomics and Health Research at the University of North Carolina in Greensboro. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Michigan Technological University and her Master of Science degree in Human Genetics from the University of Michigan.

Watch Your Mailbox

Through the years, we’ve continuously used phone surveys to ask patients what kind of job we’re doing. This information has always been critically important to us in order to make the right type of improvements in the care we deliver. Beginning July 1st, we’re changing vendors and moving toward a mail/email survey for patient satisfaction information. We are making the switch in order to collect more data, anonymously, to compare with other cancer centers across the nation.

We’ve hired Press Ganey Associates to conduct the surveys. The company has been a leader in performance improvement for more than 25 years. Approximately 10,000 healthcare organizations worldwide have used Press Ganey to help them improve the overall health care experience. The company offers a comprehensive portfolio of solutions to help clients operate efficiently and improve quality. The new patient satisfaction surveys will be sent via email and US mail. If you receive a survey, we hope you’ll give us a few minutes of your time to tell us how we can improve your patient experience.

WARNING! SKIN CANCER. NOT MADE IN THE SHADE.

Here Comes the Sun. Time to Take Cover.

Have you checked out our new billboard across the street from our main campus in Kalamazoo? The message—that skin cancer from too much sun is not ‘made in the shade’—is meant to get us all thinking about protecting our skin not just in the summer but all year round. Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. It is also one of the most preventable forms of cancer.

So, what can you do to reduce your chances of getting skin cancer? The American Cancer Society recommends these sun safe behaviors for all people every day:

- Limit the amount of time spent in direct sun when it’s most intense—generally from 10 am to 4 pm
- Wear protective clothing when out in the sun, including long sleeves, sunglasses and a hat that shades the face, neck and ears
- Wear sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher on all skin that isn’t covered
- Protect skin even on cool or cloudy days

You should also regularly examine your skin for early signs of skin cancer. And have your doctor check you over during periodic health exams.
Cancer News in the Headlines  By Joseph Mirro, MD, President and CEO/CMO

I would like to take this moment to update you on some progress in the treatment of cancer and in changing recommendations concerning cancer screening.

If you’ve listened to the news recently, you’ve heard reports of a unique drug to treat breast cancer. Preliminary data indicate that this drug is helpful in women with HER-2 positive breast cancer who have relapsed. The drug is an antibody against HER-2, combined with a toxin. The antibody is selectively taken up into breast cancer cells where the toxin is released and the cells are destroyed. Drugs similar to this have been used in other types of cancer. In the future, this drug will be tried earlier in the course of treatment and we expect it will be useful to help cure women rather than just extend their lives. It may also be useful in women who have a low expression of HER-2. This is great news and very exciting. It will take additional time before the drug is widely available and a large study will be required to determine exactly how to use the drug to help women.

Also, recent news has been critical of the potential long term side effects of radiation therapy. A number of studies have been reported in which radiation therapy resulted in secondary cancers, particularly in pediatric patients who were cured of their disease as long as 30 years ago. This side effect of radiation has been known for some time but the extent of the effect, even with low dose radiation, is becoming clear with longer follow-up in more pediatric cancer survivors. Recently, where possible, radiation has been eliminated from treatment. However, the risk-benefit ratio of radiation is considered whenever radiation is used. The benefits of radiation to ensure adequate treatment of the primary cancer outweigh the risks of side effects including second malignancies. The minimum amount of radiation used is always the minimal amount necessary. If you have any questions, please ask your radiation oncologist.

Finally, many headlines resulted from the US Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommendation that healthy men should not be screened for prostate cancer. This recommendation was based on the large number of men who are treated because they have elevated PSA’s and biopsies which show cancer. However, the likelihood the cancer will shorten these mens’ lives or cause problems is very small. It’s estimated that anywhere from 318 to 1,000 men need to be treated for each life saved. The problem is doctors and researchers can’t identify which cancers are likely to progress and cause problems. Therefore, we treat a large number of men to benefit a few of them. Side effects from treatment are also significant.

It is unlikely that this recommendation will be embraced or supported by other medical groups including the American Urological Association or the American Cancer Society. This is, of course, because the data is not perfect. The studies were not completely controlled which means that some men in the non-PSA group did have PSA’s performed and the follow-up results continue to change over time. In America, where the patient is the final decision-maker, the side effects versus the risk of cancer will weigh differently on the mind of each man involved. If you have specific questions, you should discuss them with your primary care provider or your oncologist. PSA screening will be a topic of our upcoming CME program.

If you have a particular interest in any of these topics, feel free to contact me directly.

WMCC Nurse Practitioner Wins National Award

Kelly Smith, NP-C, MSN, AOCN, a longtime nurse practitioner at WMCC, has been chosen as the 2012 Advanced Oncology Certified Nurse of the Year. The award is given annually by the Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation (ONCC).

Smith won the award for her significant contributions to oncology nursing and oncology nursing service and for supporting and promoting certification in oncology nursing. She has been an oncology nurse for 27 years and joined WMCC when it opened in 1994.

“Kelly’s deep passion to provide the absolute best care possible to cancer patients is the cornerstone of her commitment to educate nurses on the certification process”, said Pam Tibbitts, President of the Greater Kalamazoo Chapter of the Oncology Nursing Society. “She has always believed that it is important for oncology nurses to become ‘experts’ in their field so that patients know they’re in the best hands through an often difficult cancer journey. She is beloved by our patients and highly respected by her peers”, added Tibbitts.

As a member of the Greater Kalamazoo Area Chapter of the Oncology Nursing Society, Smith has held numerous leadership positions and has actively promoted nursing certification among her colleagues and peers at area hospitals and hospices. She has made numerous educational presentations in the community—at churches, colleges and health fairs—and has mentored nursing students.

At WMCC, Smith has used her vast knowledge and talents to help develop multiple programs including the neuro, breast, and gynecologic oncology conferences and clinics. She also started the center’s cancer risk assessment program and served as a genetic counselor.
WMCC Honored for Important Work in Clinical Trials

West Michigan Cancer Center is one of only six community oncology practices in the country recognized by the Conquer Cancer Foundation of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) for its work in improving cancer care through high-quality clinical trials programs. Clinical trials are research studies designed to evaluate whether a new treatment or procedure is better than the current standard of care. “As physicians, our number one goal is to provide our patients with the best possible care available”, said Raymond Lord, MD, principal investigator at West Michigan Cancer Center. “In 2011, 650 of our patients participated in cancer clinical trials, giving them the opportunity to receive cutting-edge cancer therapies. We are honored to have been chosen for this award.”

WMCC currently has 120 ongoing clinical trials in more than a dozen different cancer types, including breast, lung, prostate, colon, brain, skin and blood diseases. Patients are encouraged to ask their doctor if they might be a candidate for a clinical trial.

Breast Cancer Program Receives National Accreditation

WMCC, in collaboration with our partner hospitals—Borgess and Bronson—has been granted a three-year/full accreditation designation by the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC). NAPBC is a program administered by the American College of Surgeons. Accreditation is only given to those centers that have voluntarily committed to provide the highest level of quality breast care and that undergo a rigorous evaluation process and review of their performance.

Receiving care at a NAPBC-accredited center ensures that a patient will have access to:

- Comprehensive care, including a full range of state-of-the-art services
- A multidisciplinary team approach to coordinate the best treatment options
- Information about ongoing clinical trials and new treatment options
- Quality breast care close to home.

“I believe that we have all become better breast cancer doctors by participating in WMCC’s Breast Cancer Clinic because of the interaction with all the specialties that deal with this disease, said Nancy Kalinowski, MD, general surgeon at Healthcare Midwest. “By receiving this accreditation, it assures that we are meeting the standards and providing quality care to our patients”, she added.
# Pardon Our Dust

## Renovation Project to Better Serve Patients

A 7-month-long renovation project is underway at WMCC to improve the quality of service we provide to our patients. The goal of the construction—taking place on all four levels at the main campus in downtown Kalamazoo—is to better accommodate the increasing number of people in our community with cancer as well as meet ever-changing requirements for care.

At the heart of the renovation is a major expansion of our infusion room on the 2nd floor in medical oncology where patients receive their chemotherapy treatments. That area will increase by two-thirds, including the addition of eight chemotherapy chairs and more space around each individual chair for greater privacy. The space required to complete this phase of the expansion means we must eliminate most of the exam rooms located on the 2nd floor. To compensate, we’re moving them up to the 3rd floor. In fact, the number of rooms on the 3rd floor will increase from 8 to 21.

The first floor, home to our radiation oncology treatment program, will see the addition of three exam rooms. We’re also expanding our laboratory as well as our scheduling and registration areas to create more privacy and improve patient flow throughout the building. The reconfiguration of our existing space will help us meet the latest HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) requirements set forth by the government. The new WMCC Survivorship Clinic is housed in our newly-renovated lower level.

The project is estimated to wrap up by late October. In the meantime, our staff—in conjunction with the construction team—is doing everything possible to minimize interruptions to patient care. Let us know if you have a question or concern.

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## Complimentary Program Schedule

These services and classes are provided free of charge thanks to the generous support of our community.

| **Art as Healing** | Art therapy can assist tremendously in coping with a life threatening illness. Participants do not need artistic experience. For more information call 269.373.7446 or email socialwork@wmcc.org. |
| **Conditioning for Life** | **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. |
| **Ask the Expert** | **Topics change monthly, and are posted at WMCC and on the website at www.wmcc.org**  
WMCC hosts a monthly educational support group, designed to give patients and caregivers insight and knowledge regarding cancer treatment, and survivorship. Facilitated by WMCC masters level social workers, this program discusses practical issues patients face regularly. Guest speakers, “experts” in the field review information attendees can take away from the group to enhance their experience. |
| **Cooking Class** | **Events are posted at WMCC, as well as on the website at www.wmcc.org**  
Quarterly, seasonal cooking classes are open to patients and caregivers. WMCC’s registered dietitian reviews seasonal foods, and benefits of nutrition related to healthy lifestyles of caregivers. It’s a mix of cooking class and educational discussion regarding benefits of exercise and healthy diet. |
| **Look Good, Feel Better** | **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. |
| **Quit Smoking** | Free quit smoking classes are posted regularly at www.wmcc.org or contact social work for information  
WMCC is proud to partner with community healthcare advocates and providers to educate patients and caregivers about the health risks of tobacco use. Free quit smoking classes are posted regularly at www.wmcc.org or contact social work for information. A full schedule of community wide opportunities can be found on www.quitsmokingkalamazoo.org |
| **Tai Chi** | **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 or email wellness@wmcc.org. |
| **Yoga** | **Dates: Last Tuesday of each month**  
**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 or email wellness@wmcc.org. |

For more information on any of the classes listed, call 269.373.0129 or send an email to 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.

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![Newly renovated 3rd floor waiting area.](image-url)
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Do you have a question for your physician?
Do you want test results or need a prescription refill?

When requesting prescription refills, please have all medication information available, such as name of drug, dose, quantity, how often it is taken, name of prescribing physician and name of pharmacy.

If you have a question for your physician or nurse, please call 269-382-2500 and then dial:
Medical Oncology 24
Radiation Oncology 25
Gynecologic Oncology 26

You may get voicemail, in which case it is very important to leave a detailed message including: patient’s name, date of birth, and reason for the call. Leaving a detailed message will help expedite turn around times in meeting your needs.

We ask that you bring an updated medication list to each office visit. Also, in order to avoid wait times, it is very important that you request prescription refills from your physician or mid-level at the time of your office visit. If you call in a request, the 24-48 hour policy will apply.