15 Years Ago...Looking Back and Running Forward.

Fifteen years ago, West Michigan Cancer Center fulfilled a joint vision of local hospitals, Borgess and Bronson. A legislative mandate to lift the veil on cancer introduced a new concept – community ownership of a Comprehensive Cancer Center, conceived by a visionary community that realized the need for a cancer treatment facility for the community. The comprehensive cancer care center, West Michigan Cancer Center (WMCC), opened its doors to the region’s cancer patients, who were also treated at local hospitals. WMCC has successfully treated more than 15,000 patients and been a key component of the cancer treatment landscape in the Kalamazoo area. WMCC now serves over 12,000 patients annually.

Now, WMCC continues to raise the bar when it comes to cancer care. Our team is committed to improving the quality of life for cancer patients and their families. We offer a comprehensive range of services, including surgical, medical, and radiation treatments, as well as supportive care services. Our team of experts includes surgeons, oncologists, radiation therapists, and nurses, working together to provide the best possible care for each patient.

We believe that every patient deserves a personalized treatment plan that is tailored to their specific needs. Our team works closely with patients and their families to create a treatment plan that meets their unique cancer journey.

At WMCC, we are dedicated to providing the highest level of care, using the latest technologies and treatment options. We are committed to helping our patients live as fully as possible, from diagnosis through treatment and beyond. We understand that cancer can be a difficult journey, but we are here to support and guide patients through every step.

In the future, we will continue to innovate and improve our services, always striving to meet the needs of our patients. We are proud of the work we have done over the past 15 years and are excited for the opportunities that lie ahead. Thank you to everyone who has been a part of our journey, and we look forward to serving our community for many years to come.
Volunteers Make the Difference

Volunteers are considered the heart of West Michigan Cancer Center. They bring energy and generosity giving of themselves as they serve in a variety of capacities to help patients and their families cope with cancer.

Patient Coaches and Patient to Patient Support
Volunteer Patient Coaches, cancer survivors themselves, came alongside a patient to encourage him or her. Patient Coaches bear testimony to the real hope of beating cancer, moving on, and giving back. A coach is a listener who offers the perspective of personal experience and adds immensity to the healing process. Patients may also request peer support from former patients who were treated for a similar cancer. Coaches and Patient to Patient volunteers listen, answer questions, share their stories, and connect patients with educational resources.

WMCC volunteers also share their unique talents and resources.

Pet Therapy
When 89-year-old Pet Therapy volunteer Marjorie Kelly shows up with her golden Retriever, Lauri, her dog transforms a waiting room into a smiling room. Lauri is a therapy dog. She doesn’t know she’s a therapy dog. She just knows she loves people and draws their petting and praise.

She flops down at a patient’s feet and goes live the way only a dog can: without pretense and with no worry. She is a total distraction. Lauri’s owner, a cancer survivor herself, enjoys her weekly trips with her dog and explains why she volunteers at West Michigan Cancer Center. She gives back far more than she gives.

Reflexology
Another volunteer, Karen Merchant, gently massages hands and feet, expertly applying specific pressure to open up circulation, increase energy, and provide deep relaxation and stress reduction. As she quietly a patient’s body and soul with her healing touch, cancer patients sometimes want to open their hearts to a listening ear. Patients enjoy the calming, protective affects of this therapy, known as reflexology. Sometimes they just close their eyes and drift off, far from the anxiety and insistence of their disease and treatment regime. As Karen explains, “I don’t know who gets the bigger blessing...me or the patient.”

Warm Hearts
Volunteer Greeters set the tone for a caring environment with a positive outlook. They make sure every person who enters the door of the Center gets a warm greeting and knows their way to an appointment. Coffee Cart volunteers serve up hot coffee and a delicious cookie with a smile and friendly spirit. Skilled pianists volunteer to play the baby grand in the reception area.

Our close-knit volunteers bring good cheer when someone is feeling anxious. Patients have found comfort in expressive art classes, led by volunteer artists. Other volunteers help in the Fitness Room, while some with a green thumb help keep our grounds beautiful for everyone to enjoy.

If volunteering sounds like a rewarding way for you to spend a few hours each week, contact us and we will help you find a place that fits your lifestyle and schedule. At WMCC, there are many other ways to help, and each one reminds us that we don’t fight cancer alone, but together.

15 Years Ago...Looking Back and Running Forward.

We have great plans for the immediate future. Between another 10 pet therapy pigs, we will add several more tumor-specific clinics so patients can experience more tumor-specific and effective treatments. We will deploy even more sophisticated technologies for detection and treatment of cancer. We will continue to fabricate the best and the brightest doctors and staff. We will ensure our community, neighbors, and families have every tool possible to see that personal challenges with cancer are the least one has to fight with them when they are strong. Because together, we win.
The One That Got Away

Kate Shane isn't scared of worms. Kate’s father introduced her to fly-fishing as a young girl, but it had been a long time since she spent an entire weekend away to enjoy her childhood hobby. A single mom and busy consultant, Kate learned in 2006 that the family history of breast cancer would be hers to share. A grandmother succumbed to breast cancer and her mother had fought her own battle with breast cancer over a decade ago.

Kate met the news without surprise and without a whimper. “I kind of anticipated that someday I would have breast cancer. So, at the time I was diagnosed, I wasn’t scared, but I just thought ‘well, there we go.’” For Kate, a small lump, undetected in a previous mammogram, became a more serious topic at her annual exam. A series of tests that included an ultrasound, then a needle biopsy, finally a lumpectomy and sentinel node biopsy revealed a cancer that had spread into her lymph nodes. Months of treatment later, Kate was cancer-free, and resumed her busy work schedule without looking back.

“I closed the book on the whole cancer thing and charged forward as if nothing had happened. But it didn’t deal with the emotional changes, and the life experience of surviving cancer.” Kate learned that her cancer treatment, even though it ended well, took an emotional toll she did not anticipate. Nearly two years after her successful treatment, Kate was feeling troubles. “I was being affected emotionally by so many things that didn’t affect me before. I kind of crumbled. I was exhausted. I was depressed. When I was sick with the cancer I wasn’t able to deal with my own needs because I had to make sure there was food on the table, my kid was OK, and that she’s going to school and so on.” Kate needed to get away.

Kate first learned about fly-fishing for breast cancer survivors from a flyer at West Michigan Cancer Center. The annual event is a weekend retreat for 10 women who have experienced breast cancer at different stages; from local mastectomy to lumpectomy and everything in between, in a beautiful natural setting, experienced fly-fishing guides, mental health courses, and medical experts create a supportive environment where women find comfort and support by sharing and learning from each other’s journeys. Along the way, women enjoy breathtaking scenery, group meals, sharing time, the art of fly-fishing, the psychology of fly-casting lessons, and of course, there’s time to practice new skills.

“The highlights of the retreat was to be totally focused on me, and to live in the moment, and being in, or on near the water is really healing to me. Another was to spend time listening to other women share their experiences. It confirmed so many things I was dealing with.” These days, Kate continues her love of fishing, makes time for herself, appreciates the power of group support, and when she visits West Michigan Cancer Center, she takes time to “tell one person how much I appreciate what they do.”

West Michigan Cancer Center provides support and resources to help women not only win their fight with cancer, but also deny its emotional grip on their lives.

**Special Class Series**

**Food for Life**

**Location:** WMCC 3rd Floor Multi-Purpose Room

**Time:** 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm

**Dates:** Wednesdays

**Topics:** low-fat, low-sodium meals, immune-boosting foods, dairy alternatives, planning healthy meals and snacks.

This is a four-week class series. Topics include low-fat, low-sodium meals, immune-boosting foods, dairy alternatives, planning healthy meals and snacks. Contact Renee Wormer, RD, feature foods with significant health benefits. She also shares recipes and samples with participants. Contact Renee Wormer, RD,

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Visit Our New Fitness Room

Our fully-equipped Fitness Room, located on the lower level of the Cancer Center, is now open to current and former patients. The room has cardiovascular exercise machines and free weights for training. No matter your ability or fitness level, there’s something for everyone in the new Fitness Room. An orientation is required. Call Maureen Brown at 269-373-7476 to schedule an appointment.

Fitness Room Hours:
9:00 am - 7:00 pm

To arrange a tour, contact Lynne Emons:
269-334-9555 or lene@bhtmc.org.

The Color of Hope

The Color of Hope is a program integrating the visual arts with the healing environment of West Michigan Cancer Center through ongoing exhibitions by local artists.

Throughout 2009, each floor of the Center features works of selected artists including Kyle Adams, Mike Cieslinski, Donna Miller, Cristina Powell and Sonniatta Roseland. Some artwork is for sale. Pricing is available at the Center.

By Doris Miller

Some artwork is for sale. Pricing is available at the Center.

By Glen Heggie, MD, Medical Oncologist

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Executive Vice President, Clinical Quality
Vice President, Medical Staff
Bill Mayer, MD
Vice Chairperson
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Laura Lentenbrink
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Borgess Medical Center

Teresa McKay
Director
Glen Heggie, MD
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Kenneth Taft
Director
Harold and Grace Upjohn

Joseph Gesmundo
Director

The new cancer center immediately made a lasting difference in the health and lives of residents of Kalamazoo and surrounding counties.

Fifteen years ago, West Michigan Cancer Center (WMCC) to the north door of Borgess Medical Center and the south door of Bronson. The new cancer center that rivals the most advanced academic centers today. Fifteen years ago, and continuing to this day, West Michigan Cancer Center has created a totally unique clinical environment that is the best anywhere.

...could be acquired through cost sharing. The partnership between WMCC and Bronson, to provide a state-of-the-art cancer center that rivals the most advanced academic centers today. Fifteen years ago, and continuing to this day, West Michigan Cancer Center has created a totally unique clinical environment that is the best anywhere.

The “Chunnel” opened, connecting England and France by a 35-minute train ride. The existence of theoretical black holes was frequently seen. In women, heavy menstrual bleeding after surgery or dental extractions is very little Von Willebrand protein available to release in Type III disease, and more of the abnormal protein with DDAVP is usually not helpful, and plasma concentrates are used for treatment. Plasma concentrates are used to increase the Von Willebrand protein level. There is a concentrate that contains Von Willebrand protein. DDAVP is most useful in hemophilia clinics. They are seen by a team of health care professionals that includes physicians, specially trained nurses, social workers, physical therapists, dental hygienists, and others. With proper management, many bleeding disorders managed by the Hemophilia Treatment Center at the West Michigan Cancer Center. It is usually inherited and can be passed on to the next generation by Willebrand protein. Type II disease is characterized by an abnormally frequent occurrence of Willebrand protein. Type I disease is characterized by a quantitative deficiency of normal Willebrand protein. Von Willebrand Disease is usually divided into three general categories.

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Von Willebrand Disease Managed by the Hemophilia Treatment Center

Von Willebrand Disease is one of the more common bleeding disorders managed by the Hemophilia Treatment Center at the West Michigan Cancer Center. It is usually inherited and can be passed on to the next generation by either parent. The Von Willebrand protein is involved in an early step in the clotting process, and its loss of function leads to a characteristic bleeding pattern. Affected individuals usually report a bleeding history of easy bruising coupled with nosebleeds and bleeding gums. Excessive bleeding after surgery or dental extraction is frequently seen. In women, heavy menstrual bleeding is often a major problem.

There are hundreds of different genetic changes that affect the Von Willebrand protein. Von Willebrand Disease is usually divided into three genetic categories. Type I disease is characterized by a quantitative deficiency of normal Von Willebrand protein. Type II disease is characterized by an abnormally functioning Von Willebrand protein. Type III disease is characterized by a severe deficiency of Von Willebrand protein caused by inheriting a qualitative deficiency from each parent. Treatment of Von Willebrand Disease usually involves the use of DDAVP (a synthetic antidiuretic hormone) or a plasma concentrate that contains Von Willebrand protein. DDAVP is most useful in Type I disease because it causes a temporary release of Von Willebrand protein from the lining of blood vessels. It can be delivered as a nasal spray (Stimate), which conveniently allows for rapid treatment outside of a medical facility. Because the Von Willebrand protein in Type II disease is abnormal, releasing more of the abnormal protein with DDAVP is usually not helpful, and plasma concentrates are used to increase the Von Willebrand protein level. There is very little Von Willebrand protein available to release in Type III disease, and plasma concentrates are used for treatment.

Patients with Von Willebrand Disease are managed in our comprehensive hemophilia clinic. They are seen by a team of health care professionals that includes physicians, specially trained nurses, social workers, physical therapists, dental hygienists, and others. With proper management, many of the consequences of the disease can be mitigated.