

You'll feel better inside.

SPRING 2016

# Wellness News

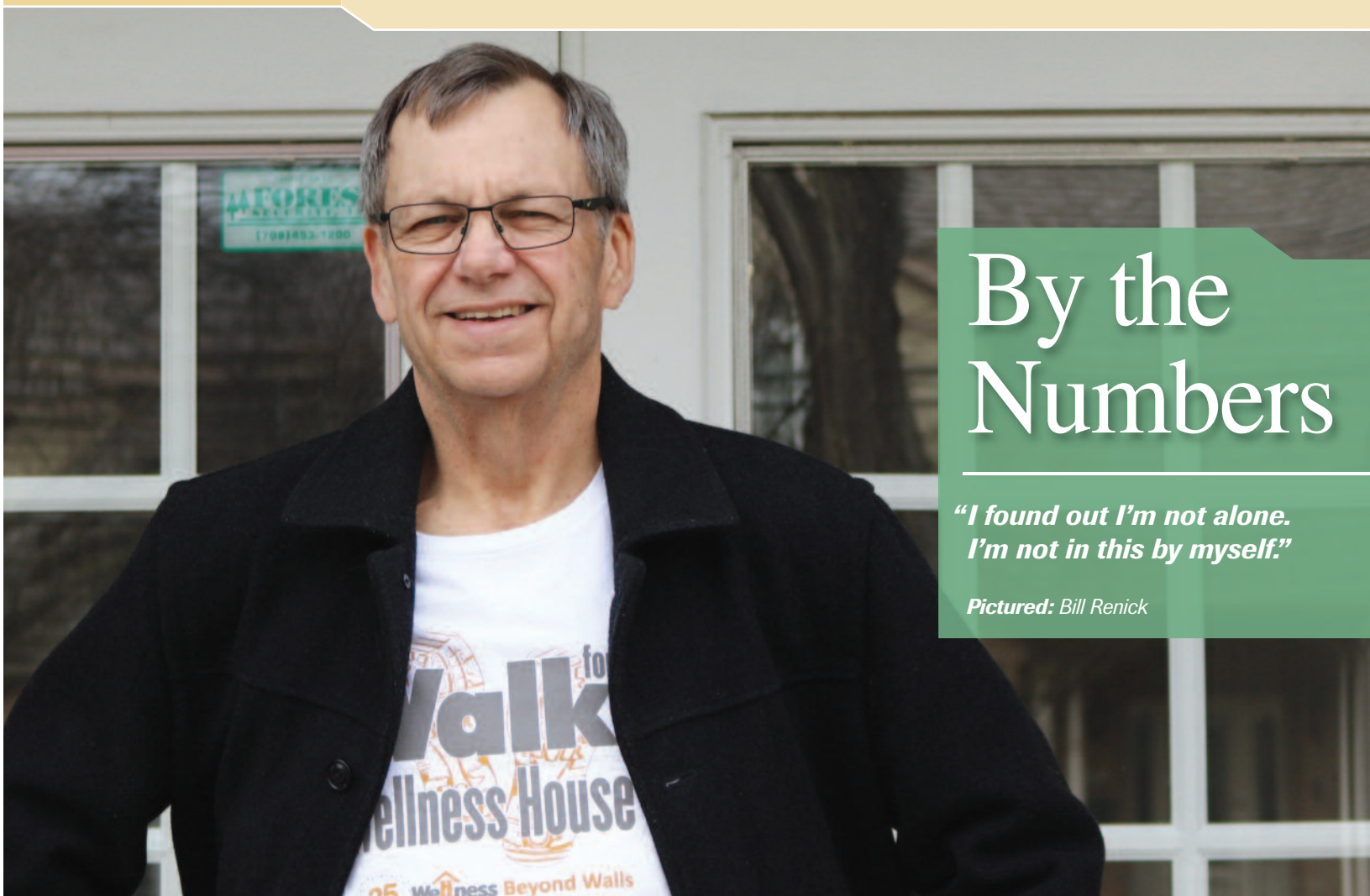
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## By the Numbers

*"I found out I'm not alone. I'm not in this by myself."*

*Pictured: Bill Renick*

There's something unique about Wellness House participant Bill Renick. Before meeting him, I had only known one other person to have survived a Whipple surgery for the pancreas, and that was my uncle. As cancer types go, pancreatic has the unfortunate distinction of having a poor survival rate because it can spread so quickly long before

symptoms manifest. Sadly, only about 6 percent of patients with pancreatic cancer are still alive five years after diagnosis. But Bill is defying the odds. When I recently caught up with him here at Wellness House, he shared some details about his cancer journey and how Wellness House has supported him.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JEANNIE CELLA  
BOARD CHAIRMAN, JOHN PARO

## Working Together

Dear Friends,

We have so much to be thankful for and to celebrate. Last spring, more than 2,200 people came out to support the Walk for Wellness House, which raised over \$620,000. Our Silver Ball this past October was also a tremendous success and raised nearly \$800,000. We've taken programs beyond our walls to locations in Chicago, Palatine and others to serve even more people affected by cancer. And of course, we celebrated our 25th anniversary. It's amazing to think about all that we've been able to accomplish. But it's also humbling when we think about all the things we must still do.

On average, nearly 3,000 individuals attend programs each year at Wellness House. That number continues to grow as the rate of cancer incidence and survivorship increases. The need for our services never diminishes. That's why now, more than ever, the generosity of our supporters and fundraising efforts are so vital to our continued success and ability to provide much needed programs.

We've undertaken a bold initiative to raise \$10.65 million over the next three years. This initiative will allow us to not only preserve and secure the future of our home here in Hinsdale but also enhance our use of technology to better serve our participants and grow existing programs in communities where the need for support services remain unmet.

People who attend Wellness House programs experience improved quality of life. We are committed to serving those who need us, but we can't do it alone. It takes the collective effort of caring individuals, like you, coming together. Today, I invite you to get involved and make a lasting impact upon the lives of others. Help us spread the word about the work that we're doing, and consider joining us on Sunday morning, May 1 for the Walk. It's a chance to honor and support those on their cancer journey. Whether you or someone you love is actively dealing with the effects of cancer or you want to help others who have been impacted, there is a place for you here at Wellness House. Together, as part of this supportive and welcoming community, we can make a difference in the lives of a growing number of individuals affected by cancer.



**Jeannie Cella, MS, LCPC**  
*Executive Director*



**John Paro**  
*Board President*



### LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

*By Jason Blackwell, Marketing Manager*

## Catalyst



For a writer, sometimes there's nothing scarier than facing a blank page. Where to begin? As frightening as the blank page may be, there's also something wildly exciting and energizing about the creative process and starting something new. Every beginning needs an ending. Everything that happens in between is part of the journey.

As a youngster, I watched a lot of TV. It was entertaining to watch how different plots and scenarios played out over the course of an hour or 30 minutes. The shows always started out the same. Some problem or event was the catalyst and sparked several subsequent events that grew to a critical point or climax. But somehow, by the end of the program, there was a solution that usually set everything right and brought the story to a peaceful conclusion. Eventually, I started to create my own stories. And as opposed to actors, I inserted myself into the role of crime fighter, lovable next door neighbor, or super hero. I evolved from watcher to writer.

The duty of the uninhibited mind is to explore and create. If our minds can act as blank pages, then every day can be a new beginning, and life need not be scary –just another story waiting to be written.

In this community, there are many stories. Some have been shared. Others have yet to be told. For so many, cancer was likely the catalyst that sparked several subsequent events that grew to a critical point: a frightening diagnosis; a financial setback; a spouse or partner walking away; a shakeup in our sense of self, fairness, or future. Whatever the case may be, cancer does not have the final word. We have an incredible degree of power in deciding how our stories unfold.

Can you imagine that something as frightening and confusing as cancer can be a catalyst that enters into our lives? Yet, somehow despite the subsequent set of resulting events that grow and grow to a critical point, we emerge from it and find a peaceful resolution as a better, stronger, and wiser person. Yes. I can.

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# By the Numbers *cover story continued*

*Continued from page 1*

It started on his birthday, Halloween of 2014. He didn't feel well. He knew something was wrong with his body. He diagnosed himself based on his symptoms. He had read about them – dark urine, unbelievable itchiness and bumps on his body, and yellowish skin. When he finally went in to see his physician, Bill recounts telling him that he believed he had pancreatic cancer. His physician tried to reassure him that it could be any number of things and to not jump to conclusions. But after running tests, Bill's suspicions and fears were confirmed. It was pancreatic cancer. Even worse, he had two forms of cancer – one on each end of his pancreas.

He was officially diagnosed in mid-November. The same week he learned he had cancer, his business went bankrupt. "We were highly leveraged," says Bill. "We were a \$50 million company with 450 employees." He speaks freely about the experience. "My life dramatically changed in a span of a month." He spent three weeks in the hospital in ICU due to complications from his surgery. After the surgery, he had chemo for 3 months and 28 sessions of radiation treatment and then another 3 months of chemotherapy.

The surgery and treatments took a toll on him physically and emotionally. Following the procedure, he was diagnosed with having Type 1 Diabetes. It's a permanent side effect of his body not being able to produce insulin anymore.

## **Welcoming and Calming**

Bill's wife of 43 years, Judy, has been his primary caregiver. "She's phenomenal," says Renick. "She comes to Wellness House for the Caregiver Support Group." It was also his wife who first told him about the other programs offered here. "I knew I needed to learn more. I needed to talk more. From the moment I walked through the door, people were welcoming and calming." After picking up the Program Guide, Bill and his wife were able to find programs that they needed, and Bill joined the Pancreatic Support Group led by Oncology Support Counselor Maigenete Mengesha, PhD. "I finally got



**Pictured:** Bill Renick (left) with Amanda Woods, MS, Oncology Exercise Specialist

into a room with people who had and understood my cancer. Maigenete was absolutely wonderful. She encouraged us and knew how to ask the right questions about where we were."

In December of 2015, Bill's doctor informed him that he was in remission. It was definitely good news and a bright light after so much upheaval. "My world since cancer, has been much smaller. We've downsized and simplified. My 12 to 13

hour work days are done. I've learned what it means to live one day at a time. It really is calming."

Bill credits his wife, his kids and grandchildren for being loving and supportive throughout his cancer journey. This was not his first experience with cancer as both his mother and father died from lung cancer, and his aunt died from pancreatic cancer. Being here at Wellness House also gave him the space and support he needed. "I found out I'm not alone.

I'm not in this by myself," said Bill.

When asked about the Walk, Bill talked about all the buzz surrounding it in the support groups and the exercise programs. "I've told my family, we have to do the Walk. It's a big deal!" Bill was in the middle of chemo when he did the Walk last year. "I did more walking in that one day than I had walked in the entire year of 2015." Like others who come out to show support, he immediately felt part of the amazing camaraderie. "Even if you can't walk, you still need to come. You'll feel the love and support of others like us," he adds.

*Being here at Wellness House gave him the space and support he needed.*



# Doing Well – Wellness House Invited to Present at APOS Conference



Maigenete Mengesha, PhD  
Oncology Support Counselor

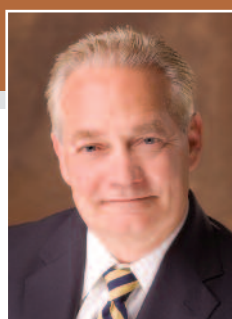
Michael Williams, PsyD  
Senior Oncology Support Counselor

The theme of this year's American Psychosocial Oncology Society (APOS) conference in San Diego in early March was how to address the stark inequities that exist in cancer healthcare in the United States: members of racial, ethnic and cultural minority communities are diagnosed at later stages of cancer, routinely receive poorer treatment, and often have higher mortality rates than counterparts with cancer living in more privileged communities. Given the compounding effects of the inequities they experience, their psychosocial-oncology needs are often both very high and unmet.

One model used internationally to successfully address such systemic social inequities is the Community Health Advisor Model, based on Paulo Friere's Empowerment Theory. This model recognizes that underserved communities become motivated for social change when empowered to address their own concerns and goals. Further, many minority communities have identified faith, spirituality, and religion as sources of empowerment for social change. People who are leaders in faith-based organizations (FBOs) within these communities are often "natural helpers" in giving advice and assistance, and in

facilitating action toward social change, including addressing cancer care inequities. As a result, partnerships between health-care providers and FBOs have proven to be substantially effective in addressing cancer health needs, such as education, support and learning effective coping strategies.

The poster that Michael and I provided for the APOS conference proposes using this model to respond to the psychosocial-oncology needs of people facing cancer in the Chicagoland area who routinely receive inequitable healthcare because they are members of ethnic, racial or cultural minorities.



David Blaydes, CFP®, MS, RFC, AIF®, is president of RPI Financial Life Planners ([www.rpiplan.com](http://www.rpiplan.com)) of Naperville. Anyone with financial questions can contact David and his team at [info@rpiplan.com](mailto:info@rpiplan.com) or 630.778.8100 Ext. 100.

## FINANCIAL WELLNESS

*David, I have heard that I can save a lot of taxes by using a Charitable Trust. Can you please explain that?*

A Charitable Remainder Trust (CRT) can save taxes while allowing a gift to a charity. Anyone who is subject to paying taxes on appreciated assets or who needs more income should look at a CRT. The benefits are:

- 1. Tax-Free Asset Change:** Appreciated assets may be sold tax free. Tax reduction is the main financial advantage of using a CRT.
- 2. Increased Cash Flow:** The appreciated

asset may generate little or no income, but you are reluctant to sell due to the tax on the gain. The CRT allows the sell to take place tax free.

- 3. Current Income Tax Deduction:** A gift to a CRT can provide you with an annual income tax deduction to offset the income.
- 4. Retirement Planning and Asset Management:** The CRT can provide professional asset management.

**5. Gift and Estate Tax Planning:** Amounts transferred to a CRT avoid gift and estate taxes.

**6. Personal satisfaction:** In addition to tax benefits, you receive the satisfaction knowing you're helping the charity of your choice.

*Securities and advisory services offered through NATIONAL PLANNING CORPORATION (NPC), Member FINRA/SIPC, a Registered Investment Adviser. RPI, Inc. and NPC are separate and unrelated companies.*



**Mary Kreller**  
*Director of Development & Marketing*

*The mission certainly attracted me to Wellness House. I was drawn to words like thrive and empower. Now that I've been here a little while, I see how fitting it is that 'House' is part of our name. This is a place with a very large family, all playing important roles (participants, staff, volunteer, board members and donors) to create this wonderful community. It is exciting to be here as our family grows and puts roots in other locations too!*



**Alice Fillers**  
*Development & Marketing Assistant*

*"Wellness House has a strong reputation in non-profit organizations in the western suburbs. I knew my office skills in donor database support would help WH continue its strong growth and fundraising success. But mostly, the welcoming and comforting feel of the house spoke to me that this is a unique place dedicated to health and wellbeing."*

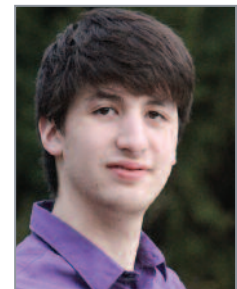
**Kelli Mitchell**  
*Program Development Specialist*

*"In the evolution of my cancer experience as my husband's caregiver for 10 years and in the wake of losing him, I realized that a passion to support others impacted by cancer had been ignited. Working at Wellness House affords me the opportunity to do this in very real ways; I am grateful every day to be here."*



**Annie Palubicki**  
*Manager of Special Events & Annual Giving*

*"I came to Wellness House with a passion to serve the cancer community having experienced the struggles of cancer in my family. I love the diversity of my position, working on the annual Walk and Ball. These events provide me with the opportunity to interact with Wellness House participants, donors, board members, volunteers, sponsors and staff members."*



**Nathaniel Tann**  
*Oncology Education Associate*

*"As a part of my background in healthcare, I learned the importance of the role of education in giving individuals the opportunity to take control of their life. I chose Wellness House because I believe in its mission to empower participants in ways that help restore order and balance to lives that have been interrupted by cancer."*

**Ellen Nieman, MSW**  
*Oncology Social Work Navigator*



*"I chose Wellness House for the opportunity to be part of a team that emphasizes hospitality and holistic care for all who walk through the doors."*



**Caly Meyers, PhD**  
*Volunteer Coordinator/HR Manager*

*"I joined Wellness House because I wanted to feel rooted in the community and be in the service of others. And, when I met the team, I knew I could make it my "work home" for many years to come!"*



## BENEFITS OF EXERCISE & NUTRITION

# FIGHT BACK AGAINST CANCER

According to the American Cancer Society, about **1.7 million new cancer cases are expected to be diagnosed in 2016**. Statistics also indicate that about **20 percent of all cancers diagnosed in the U.S. are related to body fatness, physical inactivity**, excess alcohol consumption, and/or poor nutrition, and thus could also be prevented. “These groundbreaking findings have tremendous impact for our community,” says Wellness House Executive Director Jeannie Cella. We have **served more than 32,000 individuals and families** impacted by cancer, all at no charge, since our doors opened in 1990.

The health benefits of exercise and regular physical activity are hard to dispute. That is why the recent article published in *The Economist*, “A run a day keeps the tumor at bay,” is so significant for a cancer support organization like Wellness House. The findings from the research published in *Cell Metabolism* and cited in the *Economist*’s article draw yet another definitive link between exercising regularly and reducing the risk of cancer. In addition, evidence showed that the disease was less likely to return for those who engaged in lots of physical activity after treatment.

### Healthy Living Program

“We’ve been advocating the benefits of exercise from the inception of our Healthy Living program. Exercise and nutrition are vital components of our holistic and integrative approach to supporting our participants,” Cella adds. In our ongoing efforts to provide this integrated and holistic support to our participants, Wellness House offers a fully equipped gym and has three full-time certified oncology exercise specialists on staff. We also run approximately 40 exercise and movement classes per week. At present, no other Chicagoland organization offers as comprehensive and robust programming at no charge.

Exercise is not only safe during cancer treatment, but it also improves physical functioning, quality of life, and decreases

fatigue. The Oncology Support Programming at Wellness House recognizes that people with cancer have unique physical activity needs due to a) the illness itself, b) side effects of the treatment, and c) the cumulative effects of treatment over time (i.e., the so called “late effects”). “People’s needs vary not only in the amount of exercise that is beneficial and safe, but also in the type of exercise, and the goals of the activity,” says Tracy Lester, wellness and education programs manager at Wellness House. We provide a unique offering of exercise and fitness classes such as Exercising for Getting Well; Exercising for Staying Well; Food for Life; Cancer Nutrition 101/201; Cooking Up Wellness, just to name a few.

Kathy G., a colorectal cancer survivor at Wellness House was diagnosed in August 2012 and sees the benefits of regular exercise. “It strengthens the body and the mind,” says Kathy. “Even when I don’t feel good or want to get out of bed, I think about Jeri (Wellness House Oncology Exercise Specialist Jeri Lau), and I’m exhilarated,” she adds.

On average, participants make more than 12,000 visits to our exercise program each year. It’s through our program areas such as Information & Education, Stress Management, Support & Networking, and Healthy Living that those impacted by cancer can experience improved quality of life.



Anita Ratterman

## Anita Ratterman – Cancer Fighting Foods

### 6 SIMPLE CANCER FIGHTING TIPS:

1. Eat a variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, nuts and seeds
2. Avoid sugary drinks and limit intake of calorie-dense foods
3. Limit intake of red meats and avoid processed meats
4. Limit alcoholic drinks
5. Be physically active for at least 30 minutes every day
6. Aim to meet nutritional needs through diet rather than taking nutritional supplements to protect against cancer



## Spring Greens Salad



### Ingredients:

- 1 bunch of asparagus, tender tops only
- 1/2 cup peas
- 3 -4 cups of salad greens
- 1/2 cup chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- a few sliced radishes
- 1/2 cup sliced mozzarella balls (vegan sub: avocado)
- 1 handful of chopped, toasted pistachios
- 1 handful of herbs: chives and mint

### Basil & mint oil:

- a big handful of basil and mint
- 1 small garlic clove
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice, plus some zest
- 1 tablespoon white balsamic vinegar
- 2 (or more) tablespoons olive oil salt & pepper to taste

### Directions:

1. In a food processor, pulse together your dressing ingredients. Taste and adjust seasonings. Set aside.
2. Chop your asparagus into 1 inch pieces. Blanch them for about 45 seconds in a pot of boiling, salted water. Remove immediately and transfer asparagus to a bowl of ice water. Let cool, then drain. (If you're using fresh peas, blanch the peas as well, if you're using frozen ones, just let them thaw and add them to your salad raw).
3. In a large bowl toss together the asparagus, peas, salad greens, chickpeas, radishes and mozzarella or avocado. Add as much of the dressing as you like and toss again. Add pistachios, chives and mint. Taste and adjust seasonings. Transfer the salad to a platter and serve.
4. This salad can be made up to a day in advance, just leave out the salad greens until you're ready to serve.

Recipe from [www.loveandlemons.com](http://www.loveandlemons.com)



## Taste of Wellness House Nutrition Fair

**Saturday, May 14**  
10 a.m. – 3 p.m.



**Registration is Required for the Fair and Breakout Demonstrations**

Join us for our first Nutrition Fair featuring local vendors, cooking demonstrations, and practical culinary workshops designed to promote a whole food, plant-based, cancer-fighting diet.

*Don't Miss It!*

**SPECIAL EVENT!**

## Hot Topics in Pediatric Cancer

**SATURDAY, MAY 7, 2016**  
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

*Light breakfast and lunch will be served*



**WHEN A CHILD IS DIAGNOSED WITH CANCER, FAMILIES OFTEN HAVE MANY QUESTIONS.** Join us for an educational conference focused on providing information, education and support to children, parents and caregivers impacted by pediatric cancer. Programs will be available for parents/caregivers and children 5-13 years old. Child care will be available for children 6 months and up.

### PROGRAMS FOR CAREGIVERS AND PARENTS

- Common Symptoms Associated with Treatment and Approaches to Symptom Relief
- Supporting the Couple's Relationship When a Child has Cancer
- Parenting Issues throughout Diagnosis and Treatment
- Mindfulness and Narrative in Medicine
- Survivorship
- Navigating the School System and Educational Rights
- Fertility Preservation

### PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

- Art
- Music
- Yoga
- Play

You'll feel better inside.

3K Walk • 5K Walk • 3K Fun Run • 5K Fun Run  
**SUNDAY, MAY 1, 2016 - 7 AM**



Support the programs offered at **NO CHARGE** for cancer patients and their families by participating in the annual Walk for Wellness House!

To register, donate or learn more about volunteering, visit [walk.wellnesshouse.org](http://walk.wellnesshouse.org)

## Hot Topics in Breast Cancer

*Annual Chicago Suburban Symposium*

**Saturday, June 25, 8 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.**  
**Registration Required**



If you have been diagnosed with breast cancer or care about someone who has, Wellness House welcomes you to *Hot Topics in Breast Cancer 2016*. This FREE Symposium is your opportunity to join many of the top medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, and breast surgeons in the Chicagoland area to learn about the latest updates in the treatment of breast cancer.