John Bramyard had no idea that, deep down, he was dangerously sick. A 58-year-old landscaper from Rock Island, he was looking forward to a busy spring and summer. It was early April, and the grass was already growing. John noticed it had grown a bit thicker, giving up a desk job — and health insurance — to follow his dream.

When his physician suggested it was past time for a colonoscopy, the ACS recommends every 10 years after the age of 50 — John said he couldn’t afford it but wanted to have one.

John understood that colon cancer is one of the only cancers that can actually be prevented through screening, which allows doctors to find polyps or colon and remove them before they turn cancerous. The disease is a result of unhealthy habits — smoking, alcohol use, being overweight, exercise and smoking.

“The colonoscopy was ‘nothing,’” John said. “Easy.” A few days later, however, was another conversation.

“My doctor called to tell me I had cancer,” John said. “I was returning books to the library when the conversation disrupted them. It hit me right between the eyes. I have no family history, no symptoms. Nothing.”

Following surgery a few weeks later, John visited his oncologist to learn what treatment plan would be recommended.

“He told me I wouldn’t need one,” John recalled. “He said, ‘You caught it early. Someone must’ve been looking out for you from above.’”

Being able to help even more patients who struggle with being able to afford recommended care like John did is why Trinity has joined a statewide colorectal cancer screening initiative launched last June by the American Cancer Society and the Illinois Hospital Association.

Patients who meet screening guidelines established by the program will be able to schedule colonoscopies through Trinity, who will receive grant money from the initiative to partially cover the costs for uninsured and underinsured whose insurance does not cover this service. The remainder of the cost is underwritten by Trinity and area physicians.

The effort is designed to raise awareness about colorectal health and to screen a significant number of the more than 800,000 individuals in Illinois who meet eligibility criteria but haven’t been screened, regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay.

“Colonorectal cancer does not discriminate, it is a socioeconomic or geographic community, yet sometimes there are people that prevent people from seeking care,” said Andrea Schuler, RN, Trinity Hospital of Oncology. “By participating in this campaign, Trinity is seeking to remove those barriers to help patients in our area achieve the best possible outcome. There’s no financial reason that will ever prevent us from accessing care.”

That August John’s parents, nine siblings, their children and grandchildren met, as they always do, for a week in northern Wisconsin to fish, laze and laugh. “It’s the little things like seeing your grandchildren,” he said. “No way should anyone put off care when they have it. It’s been the most I’ve ever done for one’s self. How much do you value your life? A colonoscopy is a small price to pay to continue living.”

For more information on this initiative, visit www.cancer.org or call (800) 227-2543.

Trinity supports help bring Bodies Revealed to Putnam

Financial support from Trinity is helping to bring the internationally acclaimed Bodies Revealed exhibit to the Putnam Museum. Bodies Revealed displays preserved human specimens for an up-close look inside the human body and its systems. The exhibit runs through July 7.

Bodies Revealed provides the opportunity to learn about the human body, to see inside carefully preserved real anatomical specimens and learn the detailed structure and function of the human body. The exhibition takes visitors through galleries to provide an up-close look inside the skeletal, muscular, reproductive, respiratory, circulatory and other systems of the human body. Many of the whole-body specimens are dissected in vivid athletic poses, allowing the visitor to relate to every part of the body. In addition, authentic human specimens illustrate the damage caused to organs by overeating, lack of exercise and smoking.

“Trinity is happy to help bring the international acclaimed Bodies Revealed exhibit to the Putnam Museum,” said Dr. Alla and his family. “Space is limited; reservations are required by March 19 to esterska@ihs.org.”

When viewing the exhibit, visitors will learn about the structure and function of the body, and they will see how the body works to keep us healthy.

For more information, call (800) 227-2543.

Free kidney disease seminar & exhibit tour offered

John nephrologist Dr. V.R. Alla, President & CEO of the Quad Cities Kidney Center, for “Your Essential Kidneys: How to Prevent Chronic Kidney Disease,” a free educational experience held at 9:30 p.m., Tuesday, March 26, in the Putnam’s Morner Reading Room. After the presentation, join Dr. Alla for hors d’oeuvres and a guided tour through certain portions of the exhibit. The event is possible through a grant to the Trinity Health Foundation by Dr. Alla and his family. Space is limited; reservations are required by March 19 to esterska@ihs.org or (309) 764-7027. Participants must attend the seminar to receive the exhibit ticket.

Dr. Alla said, “We recommend that everyone be screened for kidney disease. The first step is to see a nephrologist to determine your risk.”

A colonoscopy caught John Bramyard’s colon cancer early.

Trinity joins statewide initiative to provide colon cancer screenings to those who can’t afford them