

COVID-19 Update: March 20, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Today we highlight the considerable changes in clinical research at Smilow Cancer Hospital and Yale Cancer Center as a result of COVID-19. Over the past week, our Clinical Trial operation has mobilized to implement new changes to clinical trials, protocols, and patient care, all while transitioning the majority of our staff off campus. We are incredibly grateful to the entire staff of our Clinical Trials Office (CTO), our research nurses, and all of the principal investigators at Smilow Cancer Hospital for their perseverance and dedication to our patients and mission of clinical research. A special thank you to Joyce Tull, MSN, RN, CCRP, Director of our CTO, and Roy Decker, MD, PhD, Associate Cancer Center Director for Clinical Sciences, for their thoughtful leadership of our clinical research operations and workforce during the transitions this past week.

- **Staffing.** The staff of the Clinical Trials Office (CTO) has greatly reduced its clinical footprint in hospital space, but is connected. All are working as rapidly as possible to retain our capacity to support clinical research with new remote connectivity and procedures that help protect our patients and staff members. By Monday, our offices at 100 Church Street South, 300 George Street, and 2 Church Street South will be vacant.
- **Active Patients.** Patients who are currently enrolled on a clinical trial and receiving protocol therapy will continue treatment. To ensure the safety of our trial participants, some trials are discontinuing or altering the protocol. Investigators will follow current hospital guidance regarding cancelling patient visits when medically appropriate and use their judgement for Telehealth capabilities through EPIC to interact, monitor, and guide patients. CTO team members are working with investigators to reschedule study visits and procedures when appropriate and regulatory staff are ensuring appropriate compliance documents are filed with our governing bodies.
- **New Enrollments.** DART leaders and Principal Investigators have been notified that new enrollments on clinical trials are being considered on a case by case basis, with collaborative and consultative decision making between Roy Decker, MD, PhD, Associate Cancer Director for Clinical Sciences and the treating physician.
- **CRSL.** The Clinical Research Support Lab remains open and is functioning with a skeletal staff, who return home when daily work is completed.

- **Submissions and Activations.** The CTO regulatory team is prioritizing work on open protocols and existing patients. New submission and activation activity will resume as soon as feasible.

We also want to thank the nearly 400 people who joined us for our virtual Town Hall yesterday. We hope you found the information presented helpful. Please continue to send your questions to us at [canceranswers@yale.edu](mailto:canceranswers@yale.edu) and plan to join us next Thursday at 5PM for our weekly virtual [Town Hall](#). In addition, we are pleased to offer a virtual [Schwartz Rounds](#) on Tuesday at Noon to discuss and review coping mechanisms and offer support to our community.

We hope you have a healthy and safe weekend.

**Charles S. Fuchs, MD, MPH**

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Physician-in-Chief, Smilow Cancer Hospital

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