

Smilow Update: November 30, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Town Hall

Please plan to join us for our monthly Town Hall on Thursday at 5pm. Hosted by Nita Ahuja, MD, MBA, this week's town hall will include timely announcements, and a presentation on the Smilow Quality Performance Improvement Plan and Mortality Review from Kevin Billingsley, MD, MBA, Kim Slusser, RN, MSN, Tara Sanft, MD, Kerin Adelson, MD, and Michele Kelvey-Albert, MPH. [Calendar Invite for Thursday at 5pm.](#)

CTO Planning Office Hours

The Huron assessment team understands many Yale Cancer Center Clinical Trials Office (CTO) faculty and staff have experiences, ideas, or a vision for the future of YCC CTO you wish to share with Huron for consideration during the YCC Clinical Trials operational planning initiative. The purpose of these office hours is to provide you time at an open Zoom meeting to share ideas or information with one or more Huron assessment team members.

- Notes will be taken by the Huron team; however, the data gathered during these sessions will remain confidential. Observations based on attendees' input will be de-identified and aggregated with the information from the individual interviews in the final report that is summarized for leadership.
- Please join one of the Zoom sessions to share your feedback. It is not necessary to join for the full hour, you may call in at your convenience during the times provided.
- December 1, 8:30am – 9:30am [via Zoom](#)
- December 1, 5:00pm – 6:00pm [via Zoom](#)

CTO Planning Volunteers

The Clinical Trials Office is looking for volunteers to participate in the planning effort in various capacities, including in advising on communications and change management, and helping to shape the future state of our processes, operating model, SOPs, and technology.

To indicate your interest in getting involved, please complete a [short three question survey.](#) Please note that indicating your interest does not guarantee your involvement in a given role or function.

Abraxane Update

Abraxane has been on a nationwide shortage since the end of September. Smilow Cancer Hospital has developed strategies and guidelines to manage the limited supplies over the last two months. Despite the continued shortage, Smilow Cancer Hospital has been able to secure a

small quantity of drug that will allow us to expand access to patients with no other treatment options.

Effectively immediately:

1. Current patients with curative disease will continue to complete their treatment course.
2. Patients with non-curative disease who were already switched to alternative therapy (i.e., taxol, oxaliplatin or others) should continue on their current treatment.
3. Current patients with non-curative disease with Abraxane held in the current treatment plan can resume Abraxane
4. New treatment initiation can be considered with following criteria:
 - Patients have had prior severe taxane HSRs (bronchospasms, hypotension or hypoxia requiring treatment) and alternative is not an option. For mild to moderate HSRs, re-challenge with addition premedications and slower rate titration should be considered.
 - Pancreatic cancer treatment in the second line setting (i.e., patients progress on FOLFIRINOX and clinical trial is not an option).
 - Requests for a new start outside of the above criteria requires an approval from **Kerin Adelson, MD**, Chief Quality Officer.
 - We will continue to reevaluate our supply and update these recommendations as necessary.

Christmas in July Supports Toy Closet

The Smilow Cancer Hospital Oncology Nursing Professional Shared Governance Council held a successful Christmas in July fundraiser and toy collection for our Smilow Toy Closet. Council representatives on each unit and many of our Care Centers volunteered as contacts for the collection. The Council is chaired by Laurie Crouch and Desiree Sanchis. Thank you all for your contributions to help make the upcoming holidays a little brighter in Smilow!

Faculty Members needed for Research Oversight Committees

The Protocol Review Committee (PRC) and Data and Safety Monitoring Committee (DSMC) are looking for faculty members to serve on these important research oversight committees which serve a vital function for Yale Cancer Center.

The PRC assures the scientific quality of the oncology clinical research performed at Yale. The mission of the PRC is to: 1) review interventional protocols for scientific merit; 2) identify conflicts between studies that compete for the same patient population or are not consistent with the YCC programs and goals; and 3) review and vote on study closure recommendations



for underperforming studies. Meetings occur twice monthly for approximately one hour per meeting.

The DSMC monitors the safety of all cancer-related clinical research. The DSMC provides safety and compliance oversight of clinical trials through review of serious adverse events, protocol and subject deviations, internal and external audit reports, protocol-specific data and safety monitoring reports and multi-center activity reports. Meetings occur once monthly for approximately two hours per meeting.

PRC and DSMC members are appointed for three year terms with reappointment possible following successful completion of a term. Please reach out to **Stephanie Brogan** if you are interested in becoming a member or would like more information regarding these opportunities.

Smilow Star!

Kathleen Simon started her career in 2005 with the private practice of Medical Oncology & Hematology, PC and joined the Saint Raphael Campus in 2011 as a Patient Access Representative. In 2019, Kathy transferred to the Smilow Cancer Hospital Care Center in Trumbull as a Patient Financial Access Specialist and then took on a new role as an Intake Specialist, providing exceptional patient-centered care for newly diagnosed patients. Her manager, Elizabeth Rosenberg commented, “Kathy is one of the most dedicated employees that I have ever had the privilege to work with. She is always willing to help in any capacity to ensure a positive patient experience for everyone we care for.”

Words inadequately describe the impact Kathy has had on the patients and staff within our Smilow Trumbull/Fairfield Care Centers. Throughout her career, Kathy has developed special relationships with the patients she has met and supported through their cancer journey, some of those who still seek her out today. Kathy’s peers describe her as devoted, reliable, and consistent. In addition to maintaining a busy work life, Kathy has a busy family at home with her husband and two children, and is responsible for the care of her elderly parents. Kathy is truly a role model for all to emulate! She is a unique individual and we are so thankful to have her as an integral member of our Smilow Cancer Hospital team!



Best regards,

Nita Ahuja, MD, MBA, FACS
Interim Director, Yale Cancer Center
Interim Physician-in-Chief, Smilow Cancer Hospital

Lori C. Pickens, MHA
Senior Vice President and Executive Director
Smilow Cancer Hospital

Kevin G. Billingsley, MD, MBA
Chief Medical Officer
Smilow Cancer Hospital

Kim Slusser, MSN, RN, CHPN, NEA-BC
Vice President for Patient Services
Smilow Cancer Hospital

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