

COVID-19 Update: March 27, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for joining us for our Town Hall meeting yesterday. We hope you find these weekly updates helpful as we continue to navigate uncharted times. Our community continues to impress us with your unwavering support for our patients and your unwillingness to let the many obstacles we face deter our mission of providing care to our patients and advancing cancer research.

We are pleased to report that we have had 245 Telehealth visits from our main campus and 235 from the Network. Your ability to check in with your patients in their home is providing a necessary sense of stability and continuity of care and we hope to expand these numbers in the coming weeks.

Social Work

The support from our team of social workers for our patients, both in the hospital and at home, has provided a key element of consistency and encouragement over the last two weeks. We would like to thank Bonnie Indeck, LCSW, for her steadfast leadership during this time. As many of you know, Bonnie had planned to retire next week and has graciously agreed to remain with us through this challenging time.

- Social Work is still on site both on our York Street Campus (YSC), for inpatient and for ambulatory patients, as well as on site for inpatients on the Saint Raphael Campus (SRC). Additional social workers are working remotely from home, using video as well as phone to counsel patients.
- Support groups have been set up virtually, facilitated by social work, and participation has increased!
- The social work team is also calling new patients to inform them about Smilow services and ask how the team can be helpful to them at this time.
- Mental health resources have been collated and are provided to patients and families who need/want this information.

Chemo Consent during Telehealth SBAR

Situation: Increased use of Telehealth visits during the COVID pandemic has introduced multiple barriers to the process of obtaining signed consent for oral and intravenous oncology treatments.

Background: Consents are required for all new, or changes to, systemic treatment (except hormonal) for patients treated at Smilow. In person consent is not practical during video visits.

Assessment: While Telehealth visits are being conducted during the COVID period, it is necessary to have an alternative to in-person consent process.

Recommendation: During the COVID epidemic, documentation of consent in the physician's note will be accepted for Telehealth visits. If the patient is seen in person, the standard consent process should be used. If it is not possible to obtain the standard written consent, the physician should use the dot phrase: **.chemoconsent** instead. Note, the physician must sign the note in order for the consent to be valid. An incomplete note will not be sufficient for pharmacy.

This is only for use during the COVID pandemic and following it, in-person consent will again be required.

Clinical Research

Over the past week and a half, as over 170 clinical research personnel have transitioned to remote work and patient oversight, our Clinical Trials Office has continued to provide the services necessary for patient care and oversight. They are working in partnership with colleagues in our clinics to safely clear patients for research treatment and ensure protocol compliance. A special thank you to Kathleen Uscinski, RN, Associate Director for Clinical Trial Operations for our Care Centers, for her work during this transition. While preparing for retirement and working a reduced schedule, Kathy has been available to the Care Centers continuously over the past two weeks.

- Monday, March 23 (first day of remote work): 31 patients treated on research protocols, 28 cleared remotely, no issues.
- Tuesday, March 24: 34 patients treated on research protocols, 34 cleared remotely, no issues.
- Wednesday, March 25: 39 patients treated on research protocols, 38 cleared remotely, no issues.
- Thursday, March 26: 33 patients treated on research protocols, 1 in person, no issues.

Donations

We have been overwhelmed with requests from patients, physicians, and staff looking for information to share on making donations to help Yale New Haven Health. Your support is nothing short of amazing.

- We are currently in need of several resources. A full list is available on the [YNHH COVID site](#). All items should be in original unopened packaging. Please submit offers to donationsppe@ynhh.org with contact information for staff to respond to.
- Hand-Sewn Masks: If you or others would like to donate hand-sewn masks, please use the YNHHS recommended [pocket pattern](#). If masks have already been made and do not follow the pattern, YNHHS will still accept the masks and will redirect them to shelters set up for our community's homeless population. Donations can be accepted Monday through Thursday, 10 am to 2 pm at the YNHHS Regional Operations Center, 600 Derby Avenue, West Haven, CT.

We hope you find time to rest and be with your families this coming weekend. We will have more information to share from this ever-evolving situation with you on Monday.

Best regards,

Charles S. Fuchs, MD, MPH

Director, Yale Cancer Center
Physician-in-Chief, Smilow Cancer Hospital

Lori C. Pickens, MHA

Senior Vice President and Executive Director
Smilow Cancer Hospital

Kevin G. Billingsley, MD

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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