

Smilow Update: January 11, 2022

Dear Colleagues,

Hybrid Inpatient Units

YNHH and Smilow Cancer Hospital are committed to ensuring patients who need key healthcare services during this latest COVID-19 surge will have access to both outpatient and inpatient care. To allow YNHH to continue as many non-COVID clinical services for as long as possible while meeting the demand for our COVID admissions, the hospital needs to be as nimble as possible with its bed stack. The demand for beds no longer makes it possible to only place COVID-19 admissions on dedicated units. Beginning today, Tuesday, January 11, all YNHH inpatient acute care units will accept both COVID-19 positive and negative admissions.

- This hospital-wide hybridization will exclude SP 7-3 and NP 11.
- To ensure the safety of staff and patients, all units on Smilow floors NP 12, 14, and 15 have moved to completely negative air pressure rooms. With air pressure inside these rooms lower than the air pressure outside of them, the rooms will help prevent contaminants – such as the COVID-19 virus – from escaping. In addition, Smilow floor NP 11 has moved to a positive pressure environment. The transition of air pressure began at 8:30am today.
- All patients will be COVID tested prior to admission to NP11, 12, 14, and 15, and tested twice a week while hospitalized.
- In addition, all patients transferring to NP 11 from another unit within YNHH will be tested for COVID prior to transfer.
- This move is temporary as the hospital carefully manages through this latest COVID-19 surge. It also allows us to meet the clinical needs of all patients seeking our care, not only patients with COVID-19.

PPE

Surgical or N95 face masks continue to be required for all persons when they are within the healthcare system or on University property.

- Healthcare workers who have contact with known or suspected COVID patients, even if they have mild disease, should wear fit tested N95 respirators and eye protection in addition to gowns and gloves. Administrators are working to ensure that all clinical sites are stocked with N95 respirators and that they are readily available to all staff.

- N95 masks are intended for extended use and may be reused throughout the work shift while caring for multiple patients. N95s should be discarded when soiled or damaged.
- The majority of Smilow staff have been fit tested for N95 masks. If you need to be fit tested, please reach out to Respfittest@ynhh.org for YNHHS or contact Yale EHS at ehs@yale.edu for Yale Medicine.

Guidelines for Ambulatory Care of COVID+ Smilow Patients

Patients who are confirmed COVID positive may continue to require direct management or supportive care for their hematologic or oncologic diagnosis while under COVID restrictions.

- Patients should receive treatment at the Smilow Rapid Evaluation Clinic (SREC) or a designated regional site: Saint Francis Hospital, Bridgeport Hospital WT7, Greenwich Hospital Inpatient 3rd Floor, or Smilow Waterford.
- Direct verbal communication between primary attending and SREC or regional site is required.
- Written documentation of plan, including consent and goals of care discussion, and treatment plan signed by primary attending is needed.
- Referring MD will have Telehealth visit with patient on day of treatment.

Visitor Information and Smilow Ambulatory Policies

- **Inpatients:** No inpatient visitation is allowed. Exceptions are made for patients with disabilities (as a reminder, patients with disabilities are always allowed a support person) and at imminent end-of life. Visitors with approved exceptions do not need proof of vaccination or a negative test.
- **Ambulatory:** Patients coming into a procedural, perioperative, radiology, lab test, infusion, or ambulatory area may not be accompanied unless it is medically necessary, or an exception is made. Exceptions for patients in Smilow ambulatory areas include for new patient consults, patients with disabilities, and for patients needing assistance with mobility and physical care. Exceptions specific to NP7 include newly transplanted patients less than 100 days from transplant, new CAR T patient less than 60 days out from treatment, patients with graft vs. host disease (GVHD), and patients receiving blinatumomab. Any other exceptions warrant a conversation with the local leader in collaboration with the treating physician. All visitors must pass screening at entry to be allowed visitation and wear the appropriate mask while on premises.

Pharmacy Updates

In addition to the the availability of sotrivimab, (the monoclonal antibody therapy that is effective against the omicron variant) and paxlovid (the very effective oral COVID-19 antiviral drug), our YNHHS Care Signature group and pharmacy teams have added a pathway to support the ordering of molnupiravir, another oral antiviral COVID-19 drug. A detailed memo is available [here](#), with Tips and Tricks available [here](#).

- Please note, oral and IV therapies are allocated from the State of Connecticut in limited quantities.

- The oral COVID antiviral prescriptions will go directly to the Apothecary pharmacy via EPIC for dispensing.
- A pharmacy Mobile Heartbeat number (471-247-6988) is available to assist providers in navigating the prescribing of these agents.
- The YNHHS Immunocompromised Working Group is establishing criteria for Evusheld (Tixagevimab/cilgavimab) use. The goal is to have this therapy available for our patients in the coming days.

Updated Isolation, Quarantine and Testing Requirements for YNHHS

The persistent rise in COVID-19 infection in our community and our state is putting a continued strain on our healthcare system and creating potential new challenges with staffing in the coming weeks. The YNHHS COVID-19 testing enterprise has modified its testing rubric to ensure adequate availability of COVID-19 PCR tests for symptomatic healthcare workers. Healthcare worker testing can be accessed at <https://ocucovidtesting.ynhhs.org>. The most recent guidance regarding healthcare worker testing and return to work is available [here](#).

Vaccine Boosters

It is very clear that COVID-19 vaccine boosters have a substantial impact on reducing COVID-19 infections, severity of illness, hospitalization, and death. At present, roughly 50 percent of our healthcare workers have received a vaccine booster. Those who have not been boosted should do so as soon as possible.

- For YNHHS employees, healthcare worker booster appointments can be accessed within Infor. For members of the Medical Staff who are not employed by the System, the vaccination clinics can be accessed at <https://vaccinepartner.ynhh.org>. Those who received a vaccine booster outside the Health System can send in proof of booster dose administration to vaccineinfo@ynhh.org. Vaccination boosters are a mandatory condition of YNHHS employment, effective March 31, 2022.
- For Yale University faculty and staff, please review the information to get **vaccinated and boosted**, and remember to **submit** your information to the university. All faculty and staff are expected to receive boosters as soon as they become eligible.

COVID Testing

The Yale New Haven Health and Yale Medicine COVID Testing collection sites and Laboratory Medicine draw stations are operating beyond 100% capacity and same day and next day appointments are becoming extremely limited throughout the Health System.

- Community members should make appointments at <https://www.ynhhs.org/patient-care/covid-19/testing/testing-locations>
- Healthcare workers should make appointments at <https://ocucovidtesting.ynhhs.org/>
- Members of the Yale University community should take advantage of free, voluntary testing after travel, after attending gatherings, or any time you are concerned about exposure to COVID-19 at <https://covid19.yale.edu/testing>

Town Hall

Thank you for joining us for last Thursday evening's Town Hall discussion, and for sharing your questions and concerns with our leadership team. There were several timely updates provided during the webinar. If you missed the Town Hall, please feel free to watch the presentation [online](#). Please send your questions at any time to canceranswers@yale.edu.

Best regards,

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