

Smilow Update: July 28, 2023

Dear Colleagues,

APEX - Accreditation Program for Excellence

We are pleased to announce that our Smilow Radiation Oncology Centers are all accredited by the American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO) through APEX - Accreditation Program for Excellence. Our locations in New Haven, Guilford, Hamden, Trumbull, and Waterford received full reaccreditation and our Greenwich location has received full initial accreditation.

APEX is an accreditation program developed by ASTRO that validates a radiation oncology facility's excellence in delivering safe, high-quality patient care. Accreditation through APEX is a rigorous multi-step process during which our practices were evaluated using consensus-based standards. Through this process, our practices must demonstrate their safety and quality processes and show that they adhere to patient-centered care by promoting effective communication, coordinated treatments, and strong patient engagement. Smilow is the only APEX accredited institution in Connecticut and one of only two in New England who have received this distinguished designation.

This achievement highlights the consistent hard work and dedication of the entire radiation oncology faculty and staff to our patients. A special thank you to Dr. Christin Knowlton and Sharlene Hench, Regional Quality and Safety Coordinator, for leading the successful accreditation efforts.

Smilow Town Hall

Please join us for the next **Smilow Town Hall on Wednesday, August 23 at 5pm** with Eric Winer, MD, Lori Pickens, MHA, Kevin Billingsley, MD, MBA, and Kim Slusser, RN, MSN. Presentations will be made on Smilow Classical Hematology in Orange, Smilow Radiation Oncology's APEX Accreditation, and the Yale Cancer Center Clinical Trials Office. Questions are encouraged and welcome during the webinar through chat or Q&A or via email at any time to canceranswers@yale.edu.

Provider Medical Billing Compliance Training

Please join Cynthia James, MBA, CPC, CRHC, for a training session on medical billing compliance for providers at Smilow Cancer Hospital on Tuesday, August 15 at 7am. Attendees will meet their annual requirement for MBC Training for 2023. [Learn more.](#)

Topics will include:

- Evaluation and Management Overview
- Shared Visit Guidance

- Teaching Physician Rules
- EMR Guidance regarding copy and paste
- Modifier 25 Guidance when billing an E&M and procedure on the same day

Smilow East

We are proud to announce an extension of Smilow Cancer Hospital's inpatient care to EP 4-7. Beginning on Tuesday, August 1, the 13-bed unit with telemetry will transition to the Smilow Service Line to accommodate patients with sickle cell disease (SCD) and additional hematology and oncology patients needing inpatient care. This expansion will enable Smilow to provide continuity of care for patients with SCD by a specialized team.

Today, the team celebrated the expansion of inpatient care and specialized services for patients with SCD with remarks from Dr. Eric Winer, Dr. Keith Churchwell, Dr. Cece Calhoun, and James Rawlings, President/CEO of the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America, Connecticut and Michelle's House, and attendees from throughout Smilow Cancer Hospital, including members of the Sickle Cell Care team.





Smilow Hospitalist Administrative Coordinator

Please join us in welcoming Nikki Pratt as Smilow's first Hospitalist Administrative Coordinator. Nikki joined the program mid-July to support administrative tasks required to facilitate inpatient to outpatient transitions of care. Once trained, Nikki will be a resource for oncology and hematology housestaff and APPs. Nikki has been working as a Hospitalist Administrative Coordinator and is excited to transition to the inpatient medical units where she has many years of experience as both a PCA and BA.

Updated *C. difficile* Testing Algorithm & Interpretation

Colonization with *C. difficile* is common in hospitalized patients. Only when *C. difficile* bacteria produce toxins does mucosal damage and infection occur. Multiple studies suggest that patients with a positive PCR but a negative toxin result are colonized with *C. difficile*, do not need CDI treatment, and have outcomes similar to patients without CDI. Inappropriate testing leads to overdiagnosis of CDI, unnecessary treatment, and unnecessary cost or financial penalties.

- All CDI tests in patients hospitalized for 3 or more days must be ordered through the Care Signature pathway to ensure appropriate testing and guide interpretation.
- The *C. difficile* laboratory order will remain the same (LAB7877).
- Treatment is indicated in patients with both positive PCR and toxin test results. If the PCR is positive but the toxin test is negative, the patient is likely colonized, and treatment is not indicated unless fulminant disease is suspected.
- Ordering alerts will be triggered to prevent testing in any of the following events:
Laxative administration (excluding lactulose) within 24 hours; Negative PCR within 7

days; Positive PCR and negative toxin within 7 days; Positive PCR and positive toxin within 14 days (test for cure is not indicated. If needed for high-risk patients, an override code may be obtained by calling the laboratory at 1-800-305-3278.

- Submit only liquid or semisolid stools (Bristol scale 6 or 7) that conform to the shape of the container. Solid stools will be rejected.

Document Smoking History in Epic

Document tobacco history more accurately with this enhanced tobacco screening form

Tobacco

Smoking

Never Former **Every Day** Some Days Unknown

Passive exposure: Never Past Current

Types: Cigarettes Pipe Cigars

Total pack years: 0

Cigarettes

First smoked: 1/1/2023

Cigarettes History Hide

- Enter either a **date range** or a **number of years**.
- You can enter **inexact dates**, like 2019 or 5/2020.
- Enter **0 packs/day** for times the patient **wasn't smoking**.
- There can be **no gaps in time** after the patient first smoked.

Update current usage: Quit 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 3

Packs / Day	From	To	Years
1	7/1/2010 (55 y.o.)	7/1/2023 (68 y.o.)	13
1	1/1/2023 (68 y.o.)	7/3/2023 (68 y.o.)	≈ 0.5

Enter a date range for time frame smoked and get the total pack years automatically calculated!

NCCN 2023 Annual Congress: Hematologic Malignancies

The NCCN 2023 Annual Congress: Hematologic Malignancies™ will take place September 22 – 23, 2023 in San Francisco. Virtual attendance is offered for those unable to attend in person. The program features presentations and interactive discussions highlighting treatment options and supportive care for a variety of hematologic malignancies.

To register, click [here](#). You may be prompted to log in with your institution email address. To receive a 50% discount on the registration fee, enter MIHM23 into the discount code box on the order summary page of the registration process and click "apply" to adjust the fee. Fellows, residents, and students from NCCN Member Institutions can register at a discounted rate of \$25. To view the complete agenda, click [here](#).

Smilow Snapshots

We're looking for your photographic inspiration: a "Smilow Snapshot." Whether it's a stunning sunrise or sunset, a rainbow in the Healing Garden, a favorite view when walking through one of our facilities, or a selfie with your team between patient visits, snap a photo and send to **Renee Gaudette** for inclusion in an upcoming issue of DirectConnect or Smilow Update and through our social media accounts.

A Story about Love



Diana Homar, RN, an oncology infusion nurse at Smilow Cancer Hospital in North Haven, recently went above and beyond to provide comfort to a patient entering hospice care. The patient had been accompanied to appointments by their emotional support dog 'Love' and everyone in the clinic became attached to her, including Diana. The patient had no family, and a neighbor would bring them to appointments. One day, Love was not there, and when Diana asked where she was, the patient explained that they no longer had the energy to bring the 1 ½ year old lab mix along. At that point, Diana spoke up and mentioned she would be interested in adopting Love if the need arose.

As the patient's health took a turn for the worse, they were hesitant about going into hospice care not knowing what would happen to Love. Diana again spoke up and said she would arrange to adopt Love. The patient was overwhelmed with emotion at the offer, and eventually agreed. On June 1st Love entered Diana's home and became a part of her family; two weeks later the patient passed

away. Love was able to visit during this time, and they even went for one last walk together. Diana explained that she has never done anything like this before, but it felt like it was meant to be. “Love lives up to her name and even had the same vet as my other dog, it just made sense in some way,” said Diana. Love now has a loving home with someone who appreciates how difficult it was for her former owner to give her up and will carry on their memory. Diana’s gesture provided her patient with some peace in knowing that Love was taken care of and would receive the love she so openly gives, right back.

Best regards,

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

