

COVID-19 Update: May 4, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Smilow Admission Testing Guidelines

All Smilow patients should have COVID testing prior to admission to best direct bed placement and to minimize exposure for both our delicate patient population and our physicians and staff.

- Patients who arrive at the York Street or Saint Francis Emergency Department and need admission will be tested in the ED.
- Patients who will be admitted for surgery or other elective treatments (including chemotherapy and stem cell transplant) are scheduled for testing at one of the YNHHS Ambulatory Testing sites. The testing for non-surgical patients will begin this Thursday.
- Patients being admitted from home, a clinic, or a care center between the hours of 7am-7pm will be sent to the Smilow Rapid Evaluation Clinic if they are deemed high-risk, and to the Extended Care Clinic if they are considered low-risk. After hours, high-risk patients will be sent to the ED, low-risk patients will be admitted and tested on unit.
- Transfer patients should be tested prior to transfer by the sending hospital or unit. If transfer is urgent, high-risk patients will be transferred to a COVID unit to rule out infection, low-risk patients will be transferred to an oncology unit.

COVID-related Research

Yale Cancer Center member **Craig Wilen, MD, PhD**, Assistant Professor of Lab Medicine and of Immunobiology, is collaborating with **David van Dijk, PhD**, Assistant Professor of Computer Science and Medicine (Cardiovascular Medicine), to study SARS-CoV-2. The Wilen laboratory is currently performing drug and genetic screening as well as single-cell RNA sequencing of human airway epithelial cells experimentally infected with SARS-CoV2. The van Dijk Lab is using advanced algorithms to analyze the single-cell and screening data. Over the last month:

- The team identified that ciliated cells are the major target of SARS-CoV-2 infection in the bronchial epithelium.

- They determined that SARS-CoV-2 induces a robust innate immune response in infected cells characterized by increased expression of interferons and IL-6.
- Drs. Wilen and van Dijk will next focus their research on the severity of SARS-CoV-2 compared to other types of coronaviruses, and in other airway tissues in vitro and in vivo

Upcoming Events

Please join us for [Yale Cancer Center Grand Rounds](#) Tuesday at noon with **Aaron Ring, MD/PhD**, and **Eric Meffre, PhD**.
[Request Zoom >>](#)

Please join us for our next [Smilow Town Hall](#) on Thursday, May 7 at 5pm. **Marna Borgstrom**, CEO of Yale New Haven Health and Yale New Haven Hospital, will join us for a discussion on the recent changes in cancer care delivery, and our COVID-19 response. In addition, **Kevin Billingsley, MD**, and **Kim Slusser, RN**, will provide updates from Smilow, and **Roy Decker, MD, PhD**, and **Joyce Tull, RN**, will brief us on transitions in clinical trials.

Smilow Stars

The **Smilow Cancer Hospital Care Center in Torrington** had scheduled to launch Snapboard in Epic early last month, but thought about reconsidering their plan when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Scheduling patients was already undergoing considerable change. After careful thought, the team moved ahead with the attention and help of **Sandy Sabia**, Support Coordinator, **Holly Skoczylas, ACA**, **Abigail Hemingson, RN**, and **Jo Ann Lefebre**, Patient Financial Access Specialist. Together, their tireless efforts helped to transition patient scheduling to Snapboard in just a few days, and, in the end, improved scheduling for the entire office and helped with patient safety and social distancing during visits. This is just one example of the teamwork and quick response seen from employees throughout the Smilow Network in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and we thank you!



Best regards,

Charles S. Fuchs, MD, MPH

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