

## Smilow Update: March 5, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

### Week of Gratitude

Please join us as we take time to reflect and cherish the moment during Yale New Haven Health's Week of Gratitude beginning on Sunday. Members of the Smilow leadership team will be rounding daily at all locations and at various times. We hope each of our clinical teams will pause throughout the week and take the opportunity to recognize and honor our providers and staff for their exceptional commitment and compassion. If you choose to share your gratitude on social media, please tag @SmilowCancerHospital and @YaleCancer #ynhhsgratitude.

### PPE Update

Beginning on Monday, March 1, patients and other visitors presenting with a cloth mask to any Smilow facilities are being provided with a face mask, which may be worn over their cloth mask. Only medical-type paper masks are acceptable for single masking. Please review the updated [procedures](#) for more information.

### Inpatient Visitation Policy

On Wednesday, March 3, Yale New Haven Hospital moved to phase 3 expanded visitation. We will allow 1 visitor for adult inpatients with a length of stay greater than 8 days daily from 10am-6pm. One visitor per day, no switching during the day, but patients can have a different visitor each day. This currently does not apply to dedicated COVID positive units or those patients who are COVID positive. All current exceptions remain in place.

### Ambulatory Visitor Exceptions

The following guidelines have been issued for allowing exceptions at Smilow Ambulatory sites. All exceptions for visitors are on a case by case basis and at the discretion of the clinical provider. Visitors will be allowed entry only if social distancing can be maintained throughout the visit.

#### Exceptions per Smilow Leadership Recommendations:

- New consult
- Newly diagnosed patients receiving C1D1 therapy
- Disease Progression/Reviewing scans/Treatment planning
- Procedures: Bone Marrow Biopsy, lumbar puncture
- Patients needing assistance with mobility and physical care

#### Exceptions specific to NP7:

- Newly transplanted <100 days

- New CAR T patient <60 days
- Graft vs Host disease (GVHD)
- Blinatumomab administration (requires driver/neurotoxicity)

### **Closing Encounters in a Timely Manner**

In order to keep each patient's care team appropriately informed across the health system, providers should strive to complete ambulatory encounters within 24 hours. Because patients are typically cared for by collaborating providers across specialties and locations, failure to complete and close ambulatory encounters within three business days of the encounter exposes patients to risk of delays in care, or suboptimal care resulting from incomplete information. As such, ambulatory encounters are expected to be closed within three (3) business days of the encounter.

Beginning on Thursday, April 1, 2021, failure to meet timely closure of medical records will result in the following sequence of events:

- If an encounter remains open after 3 days, it will route to your Epic InBasket as a reminder for you to close the encounter.
- If 14 days have passed and the encounter remains open, you will receive an email reminder that failure to close it in the next 7 days will result in clinical suspension.
- If an encounter remains open after 21 days, you will receive a final reminder and notification that you will be suspended from clinical responsibilities until the record is closed.

### **Updated Breast Cancer Screening/Imaging Guidelines**

Yale Breast Radiology has worked with the Vaccine Clinical Advisory Group to issue modified, practical recommendations regarding management of post-vaccination lymphadenopathy in the context of breast cancer screening/imaging. The following recommendations are for women who are low risk for breast cancer and have no personal history of breast cancer who have unilateral axillary lymphadenopathy within 4 weeks of COVID-19 vaccination.

#### **Screening mammography**

- Non-dense breasts – BI-RADS 2, no follow-up, with statement “No imaging follow-up is required unless there is clinical concern.”
- Dense breasts – BI-RADS 0, recommend screening ultrasound (if not already performed)

#### **Screening Ultrasound**

- If the mammogram is normal and the axillary nodes are unilateral and enlarged, but otherwise normal appearing nodes – BI-RADS 2, no follow-up, with statement “No imaging follow-up is required unless there is clinical concern.”
- MRI Screening:
  - Because these patients are typically high risk for breast cancer – BI-RADS 3, recommend follow-up bilateral US in 3 months, assuming the most recent mammogram is also normal.

### **Tobacco Treatment for Your Patients**

We know how time-consuming it is to address tobacco use during a busy clinic. The Tobacco Treatment Program team is currently available via telehealth and will save you time, so you can focus on what you do best: treating and curing cancer. Refer through EPIC: “Amb Ref Smoking Cessation” or +ADD ORDER: “tobacco”, by email [Quitsmoking@ynhh.org](mailto:Quitsmoking@ynhh.org), or by phone at 203-688-1378.

- A new feature - Smilow pharmacists at New Haven (Friday afternoons) and Guilford (Tuesday afternoons) are now offering tobacco treatment for patients as part of their clinical care management.
- A new clinical trial – patients undergoing surgery for cancer or suspected cancer can enroll in our new trial of a perioperative tobacco cessation intervention (counseling + NRT + financial incentives).
- Our Tobacco Service offers comprehensive, all-in-one treatment for cancer patients who smoke or use tobacco and their loved ones across the Smilow Care Network.
  - Personalized behavioral support
  - Medication prescribing
  - Connecting patients to mental health services
  - Helping patients quit before surgery or starting treatment
  - Harm reduction alternatives for those struggling to quit
  - Providing access to additional resources (quitlines, free text-based support)

### **COVID Vaccine Information**

Smilow Cancer Hospital providers and staff are over 80% vaccinated! Thank you for quickly scheduling your appointments and working so hard to protect our patients and community from COVID-19. If you have not yet scheduled your vaccination, please login to MyChart to do so or call 844-543-2147, Option 2. An updated [Vaccination FAQ for Employees](#) is available for review.

- Smilow will host a [Patient and Family Forum on Vaccinations](#) on Thursday, March 11 at 7pm. Please share this information with your patients, and [join us](#).
- Yale New Haven Health has started scheduling vaccinations for people 55+ through an online portal: [www.ynhhs.org/covidvaccine](http://www.ynhhs.org/covidvaccine) The phone line, 1-833-ASK-YNHH (275-9644), is also available for scheduling assistance. The number for MyChart or technical assistance is 475-246-804. A full list of [vaccination sites](#) is available online.
- A new flyer is available for order through the [YNHHS Print Center](#) on vaccination information and eligibility for distribution to patients at Smilow sites. Please search for “17952 - YNHHS Covid-19 MassVax Phases Flyer” to order the flyer for your clinic sites.
- All patients undergoing active treatment, except those post-stem cell/bone marrow transplant or CAR T-Cell treatment, are highly encouraged to receive the COVID-19 vaccination as soon as they are eligible. [National Comprehensive Cancer Network \(NCCN\) consensus guidelines](#) are available to provide additional guidance.
- Patients who have had a stem cell transplant or received CAR T-Cell therapy in the last three years have received a letter asking them to reach out to their provider prior to scheduling their vaccine. Please transition any inquiries to transplant providers via MyChart or by calling 203-200-2278 for adults and 203-785-4640 for pediatric patients.

## Smilow Star!

So much has changed since the pandemic began here a year ago. What has not changed is the dedication and commitment of the two Intake Specialists in our Breast Center. **Antonette Graziano** has been an Intake specialist in the Breast Center for nearly 6 years and **Griserl Sterling** joined the intake team over a year ago. As intake specialists, they are the first voice reaching out to the women, and less frequently men, many with newly diagnosed breast cancer, others with Stage IV breast cancer, that are referred for care at The Breast Center at Smilow Cancer Hospital. Some patients are shocked, others are very emotional, many are scared. As many people know, navigating cancer care at a stressful time is incredibly challenging. Antonette and Griserl have worked closely with their nurse coordinator colleagues, and have made entry to care for so many patients streamlined and navigable. They both embody the values of Yale New Haven, always patient -centered, respectful, and compassionate.



Antonette recently spoke to a woman's husband who was desperately concerned about his wife, and her breast changes. She had been paralyzed with fear. Antonette provided a gentle, caring, non-judgmental voice, and was able to help the woman agree to come in for a visit with one of our breast surgeons. Dr. Horowitz recognized Antonette's pivotal role in getting this patient into care.

Shagunna "Renee" Muse, Antonette's manager stated, "Antonette positively impacts our patient's initial visit to the Breast Center, and I have received several compliments from patients and team members confirming her great customer service and kind nature. She diligently works late hours to guarantee that new patients are not anxiously awaiting a call back for an appointment during an already stressful time. She is an asset to our Women's Services department."

Griserl recently had three very ill, hospitalized metastatic patients who were referred for outpatient visits after discharge. Obtaining all the critical documentation needed for these visits, setting the visit up, ensuring the patient and family have all the necessary information, can be quite complex. Together with the nurse coordinators, Griserl was able to provide timely, safe visits for these women. The family members verbalized their gratitude for the assistance.

We could go on and on in appreciation of Antonette and Griserl, they truly are Smilow Stars!

**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

Yale Cancer Center | [www.yalecancercenter.org](http://www.yalecancercenter.org)

STAY CONNECTED

