

Smilow Update: December 30, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

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. YNHHS has released updated recommendations and requirements for healthcare personnel who are infected with COVID-19 or had high-risk exposure to COVID-infected individuals based on the updated **CDC recommendations**:

COVID-19 Positive Healthcare Personnel (HCP):

- COVID positive HCP determined by either positive PCR or rapid antigen test
- Return to Work: HCP who have completed their isolation DO NOT NEED clearance from the Employee Resource Center or a negative test to return to work.
- The HCP will receive a presumptive clearance via MyChart to return to work if they are fever free and have improved mild symptoms.
- COVID positive HCP who are immunocompromised or have severely ill disease will need to home isolate for 20 days.

Asymptomatic HCP who had a high-risk exposure to someone infected with COVID-19:

- Asymptomatic HCP who had a booster vaccine dose may continue to work. Testing is not required. If they develop symptoms at any time, they should be removed from work and obtain testing using the following link: <https://ocucovidtesting.ynhhs.org/>
- Asymptomatic HCP who are not fully vaccinated or are fully vaccinated but do not have their booster dose may continue to work but should be tested for COVID-19 once on day 1 or 2 after the exposure and once again between day 5-7 after the exposure. Use the link below to schedule the tests. If they develop symptoms at any time, they should be removed from work and obtain testing using the following link: <https://ocucovidtesting.ynhhs.org/>

Updated Visitor Information

- **Inpatients:** Beginning on Thursday, December 30, no inpatient visitation is allowed. **Exceptions** will be 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, for patients with disabilities, and for patients needing assistance with mobility and physical care. 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.

Blood Shortages

- The ongoing pandemic, loss of staffing at blood supplier levels, and reduced donor numbers have exacerbated pre-existing shortages in the blood supply. To address a predicted, more precipitous drop in group O RBC during the holidays, the American Red Cross has modified blood ordering and delivery, creating a daily 'allocation system.'
- Requests for O RBC units will largely be filled with half doses or aliquots for requests up to 2 units; requests >2 units will be prospectively screened by blood bank medical staff.
- Please consider signing up to donate blood at a local blood drive. Drive information can be found on the American Red Cross website: <https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/find-drive>

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 www.ynhhs.org
- Healthcare workers should make appointments at <https://ocucovidtesting.ynhhs.org/> This link is specifically for employees and the fastest way to schedule the earliest appointments. Employees must use either Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox to schedule through this site. Calling the Employee Resource Center will not result in quicker testing. Please use the link to schedule rather than calling the Employee Resource Center.

Town Hall

Please plan to join us for our monthly Town Hall on Thursday, January 6 at 5pm. Hosted by Nita Ahuja, MD, MBA, January's town hall will include timely clinical announcements from Kevin Billingsley, MD, MBA, FACS, a presentation on the Cancer Outcomes, Public Policy and Effectiveness Research (COPPER) Center from Cary Gross, MD, and an Enrollment Prioritization Update from the Clinical Trials Office from Roy S. Herbst, MD, PhD, and Alyssa Gateman, MPH, CCRP. [Learn More](#)

Best regards,

Nita Ahuja, MD, MBA, FACS

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