

Medical Staff News

Newsletter for the Medical Staff of Greenwich Hospital | May 2022

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From the desk of the CMO

May brings weddings, graduations, baby showers... and a new hand hygiene initiative!

Karen Santucci, MD, Chief Medical Officer

Dear Mighty Team,

We just launched a huge initiative and need your help. Every year, an estimated two million patients acquire hospital-related infections and 90,000 of these individuals die from their infections. The best way that we can help prevent pathogens from being transmitted is through good hand hygiene.

Anytime we cross a threshold/enter or exit a room, even if we are not planning to touch or examine a patient, we need to wash our hands with soap and water or use the wall mounted hand sanitizer. If we are in a room where there is more than one patient, like the PACU or ED, we need to wash our hands or Purell before we cross the imaginary line between patients. To help us develop muscle memory in doing this, we will be performing audits on all of our units. Some of us will announce that we are watching and providing friendly formative feedback, other times we will serve as “secret shoppers” and may even travel in disguise. For those of you who have worked clinically with me, you know that I have a stash of amazing wigs and mustaches and have not been shy about using them!

Another reminder – long or artificial fingernails and gel nail polish is not allowed, as these things increase the risk of transmitting pathogens. When I was a pediatric intern at Kings County Hospital in Brooklyn, during my Neonatology rotation, we lost three beautiful full-term babies to overwhelming sepsis! One morning at 3 am, I found my senior resident crying, leaning against the wall and slowly sliding to the floor in despair. I thought, “get up, get up, I need you!” as a nurse frantically called to me saying the blood pressure of another baby with poor color and grunting respirations was 44/20. The blood cultures came back. The same bacteria had stricken each baby. The nursery was shut down and the remaining healthy babies were transferred. Everything and everyone was swabbed. The source was identified. The artificial nails of a staff member were the culprit – someone who entered the building every day intending to help babies, not hurt them.

That was 32 years ago and I remember it like it was yesterday. Imagine the memories of the parents of those babies.

If we wash our hands every time and make a conscious decision to do it, it will become automatic. We will really strengthen our muscle memory and we will save lives!

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Okay, keep a look out for the secret shoppers and remember hand hygiene is the responsibility of us all!

Thank you,

Karen

More than 130 Greenwich Hospital physicians named Top Doctors

A total of 657 physicians affiliated with Yale New Haven Health – which includes Greenwich, Bridgeport, Yale New Haven, and Lawrence + Memorial hospitals in Connecticut, Westerly Hospital in Rhode Island, and Northeast Medical Group – were selected for *Connecticut Magazine's* 2022 Top Doctors in America list in the May 2022 issue.

The list of Yale New Haven Health physicians includes 133 Greenwich Hospital physicians. “We greatly appreciate our talented and compassionate physicians who enable us to deliver the highest level of care to the many communities we serve in Connecticut and New York,” said Diane Kelly, DNP, RN, president of Greenwich Hospital.

The magazine partnered with Castle Connolly to compile the annual list of the state’s top physicians. Physicians were able to nominate colleagues and peers who are board-certified in their specialty and 10 years post medical school. Castle Connolly made the final determinations.

Physicians affiliated with Yale New Haven Health representing various specialties comprise 42 percent of the total list. The full list is included in the May 2022 issue of *Connecticut Magazine*. For more information on the Greenwich Hospital doctors named in this year’s “Top Doctors” issue, visit www.greenwichhospital.org.

Greenwich Hospital Medical Staff profile: Charles Seelig, MD



Teaching has been a passion for Charles Seelig, MD, director, Medical Education, Greenwich Hospital, since medical school at the University of Rochester. Decades later, he continues to be inspired by his work, mentoring new generations of doctors.

“It started when I was in medical school, but when I began my residency, I found that

working with medical students and teaching was what I really wanted to do,” Dr. Seelig said. “That was nearly 50 years ago and I’ve never looked back.”

While he always had a hand in graduate medical education programs throughout his career, Dr. Seelig started as an Air Force primary care internist. He balanced his practice with his love of teaching until 1984 when he joined the faculty at the University of Nebraska.

“That’s when I shifted my career to focus on academia full-time,” he added.

From Nebraska, Dr. Seelig moved to North Carolina to become the director of Ambulatory Care at New Hanover Regional Medical Center and a full-time faculty member at the University of North Carolina. His next move would see him join Greenwich Hospital as the director of Medical Education.

“Looking back, everywhere I went, there were so many wonderful people,” Dr. Seelig said. “Certainly, the residents that I’ve worked with, many of whom I keep in touch with.”

Dr. Seelig has been honored for his work in graduate medical education several times, but he said there is one award that he cherishes above the others.

“In 2012, I was recognized by our accrediting agency, the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, with the Palmer J. Parker Courage to Teach Award,” he explained. “There have been other awards, but this is a lifetime achievement award and it’s very special to me.”

When discussing the pressure that comes with being a medical professional, Dr. Seelig said balance is the most important thing for doctors of all ages to strive for.

“My whole life has been about balancing my home life, which is more important to me than anything, with my professional life, which is also very important,” he said. “My wife is also a physician and we’ve had to balance two careers with raising four children which is not an easy thing to do. But if you maintain focus on what’s really important in life, not just what’s important to you as an individual, you’ll achieve balance.”

While Dr. Seelig cautions that achieving that balance is not easy, he does provide a bit of advice that he says helps him.

“Every night when I go to sleep, I think about what I’ve done that day,” he said. “I also think about what I can do in the next day to make the lives that I’ve touched better. That includes patients, trainees and staff. I recommend

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some kind of self-reflection to everyone because it helps ground us and remind ourselves of why we do this and who we do it for.”

New YNHHS Wound Executive Committee established

YNHHS recently announced the new Yale New Haven Health System Executive Committee for Wound Services, comprised of the medical directors who lead the wound centers throughout the health system.

Sandra Wainwright, MD, director of Hyperbaric Medicine, represents Greenwich Hospital on the committee, which is charged with coordinating, optimizing, and standardizing all aspects of wound services within all of the Delivery Networks.

The collective vision is to have YNHHS become a nation-leading wound care program, setting standards for the collaborative delivery of clinical care and dissemination of wound education and research that will be unprecedented in the U.S. More to come on the work of the committee.

Greenwich Hospital named one of America's Best Hospitals for Patient Experience and Cancer Care

The Women's Choice Awards has named Greenwich Hospital as one of America's Best Hospitals for Patient Experience and Cancer Care in 2022.

By receiving the Women's Choice Award, Greenwich Hospital is part of an elite national network of healthcare facilities committed to providing the highest level of care and empowering individuals to make informed healthcare choices. These top Women's Choice Awards are among several presented to Greenwich Hospital.

The Patient Experience Award is presented to organizations whose patients said they “would definitely recommend” the hospital when completing the federal Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) survey. The Women's Choice Award further enhances Greenwich Hospital's national reputation for an exceptional patient experience.

The Smilow Cancer Hospital Care Center in Greenwich is accredited by the American College of Surgeons as a

comprehensive community cancer program. The cancer care center offers patients advanced diagnostic, treatment, rehabilitation and survivorship services.

News from the GH Medical Staff DEI Council

Submitted by Gloria Huang, MD, member, Medical Staff DEI Council

The importance of inclusion in clinical trials

Cancer is the second leading cause of death, after heart disease, in the United States. Almost two million new cancer cases and over 600,000 deaths from cancer are expected to occur in the U.S. this year. Encouragingly, the mortality rates of most common cancers has declined over the past two decades. More effective prevention, detection, and treatment have resulted from basic and translational research, and well-designed clinical trials. Clinical trials, in particular “the gold standard” randomized prospective trials, provide Level 1 evidence that establish new, improved standards of care.

Historically, women were excluded entirely from clinical trials. Important randomized trials in cardiovascular disease such as the Harvard Physicians' Health Study enrolled over 22,000 male but no female physicians. Lack of data regarding sex-specific differences have resulted in both over treatment and under treatment of women

Persistent disparities in research funding significantly impede progress in prevention and treatment of women's cancers, in particular gynecological cancers including uterine corpus, cervical and ovarian cancer. Uterine (endometrial) cancer is the most common gynecological malignancy in the United States. While the overall risk of dying from most other cancers is declining at an accelerated pace, uterine cancer is one of the few cancers with a rising incidence and mortality rate. The sharpest increases in uterine cancer incidence have been among Asian, Hispanic and non-Hispanic Black women. In addition, a large racial disparity in uterine cancer mortality exists, with Black women experiencing a two-fold higher risk of death compared with White women. Despite this, research funding relative to the disease lethality ranks among the lowest among common cancers.

The cervical cancer mortality rate for Black women is also two-fold higher than for White women. Women from racial

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and ethnic minority populations, women residing in rural and remote areas, and women who are otherwise socially or economically disadvantaged experience lower rates of cervical cancer screening and optimal treatment.

As a society, we have the knowledge and resources to eliminate cervical cancer, but collective action is required to attain this achievable goal. As the case for uterine and cervical cancer, ovarian cancer funding-to-lethality also ranks in the bottom half of federal funding. Ovarian cancer remains the fifth most common cause of cancer death among women in the US. Due to a lack of effective early detection and screening, most women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer at an advanced stage of disease with metastatic spread to the upper abdomen and other sites. Yet, National Cancer Institute-supported gynecological cancer clinical trial funding declined substantially in the recent era.

Encouragingly, the overall mortality for most common cancers is declining at an accelerated rate. In the genomic era of medicine, personalized medicine based on DNA sequencing and molecular testing is not the exception, but the rule. Immunotherapy offers the hope of cure of previously incurable, metastatic cancers. Yet the most common gynecological cancer is rising in incidence and mortality, while the leading causes of gynecological cancer death remain underfunded.

Invigorated investment in gynecological cancer research and increased community engagement of diverse groups to ensure equitable access to clinical trials is urgently needed to ensure that female-specific cancers and racial disparities in cancer outcomes are not overlooked and left behind in the race for progress.

GH doctor among YNHHS leaders to receive United Hospital Fund's Excellence in Healthcare Award



Christopher M. Davison, MD

The United Hospital Fund (UHF) recently announced the winners of the 2022 Excellence in Health Care Award for Quality Improvement Champions, including eight recipients from Yale New Haven Health. The award honors extraordinary

leadership in improving quality of care, patient safety and patient experience.

Greenwich Hospital's Christopher M. Davison, MD, medical director, Emergency Medicine, was among the YNHHS honorees. UHF recognized a total of 73 physicians, nurses, physician assistants, pharmacists and other health care workers for their vision and accomplishments in the field of health care.

The Tribute to Excellence in Health Care was initiated in 2019 to recognize healthcare innovation and improvement aimed at achieving the highest quality patient care by UHF, an independent nonprofit organization with a mission to build a more effective and equitable health care system.

Congratulations Dr. Davison!

Safety, Quality and Experience Conference on June 2

The 2022 Joseph A. Zaccagnino Safety, Quality and Experience Conference is coming up quickly, on Thursday, June 2, at the Oakdale Theatre in Wallingford. Sponsored by Yale New Haven Health, Yale Medicine and Yale School of Medicine, the conference offers a dynamic day of learning and sharing of information designed to improve the healthcare experience. The conference is open to employees, staff and faculty across all three organizations. This year's theme, "Gratitude," brings greater attention to the people who influence, execute, monitor and report the many different ways we collectively improve safety, quality and the patient experience.

Guest speakers include:

- Dr. BJ Miller, pre-eminent speaker on patient-centered care, palliative and end-of-life care.
- Nick Proper, chief executive officer and impact coach with Impact Human Performance.
- Dr. Laurie Santos, a professor of psychology at Yale University and an expert on human cognition, its origins and the evolutionary biases that influence life choices.

The conference will also showcase the work of over 100 abstracts from teams across our organization in the areas of safety, quality, experience and engagement. Online conference registration is open at <https://sqe.ynhh.org/>. Registration is free.

Pain, Opioids and Worker Wellness training

The Yale Program in Addiction Medicine will offer a free, in-person continuing medical education training for Connecticut-based clinicians, entitled Pain, Opioids and Worker Wellness. Attendees will be eligible for AMA PRA Category 1 Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits.

The in-person training session will be Tuesday, June 7, 2022, 8 am-12:30 pm at the West Campus Conference Center, 100 West Campus Dr., Orange.

This training, made possible by an unrestricted educational gift from The Hartford, is designed for clinicians who care for injured workers navigating the return-to-work process and who may provide care for acute or chronic pain. Attendees will participate collaboratively in didactic and interactive learning.

Learn more by visiting the online event page for this training: <https://medicine.yale.edu/event/pain-opioids-and-worker-health-a-live-training-event>.

Newsletter Submissions

Deadline for submission of content for the June 2022 issue of Medical Staff News is Tuesday, May 31, 2022. Please submit items for consideration to Karen Santucci, MD, at karen.santucci@greenwichhospital.org or Myra Stanley, YNHHS at 203-688-1531 or myra.stanley@ynhh.org.

Medical Staff Changes (April 2022)

Appointees



Daniel Boffa, MD
(Thoracic Surgery)
Smilow Cancer Hospital
35 Park St.
New Haven, CT 06519
Phone: 203 200 5864
Fax: 203-200-2434



Jung Kang, MD
(Radiation Oncology)
Yale Therapeutic Radiology
5530 Park Ave.
Trumbull, CT 06611
Phone: 203 337 8700
Fax: 203 337 8701



Sharon Ostfeld Johns, MD
(Pediatrics)
Greenwich Hospital – Pediatric Hospitalists
5 Perryridge Road
Greenwich, CT 06830
Mobile Heartbeat: 475-355-4698



Francis Pelham, MD
(Plastic Surgery)
1021 Park Ave.
New York, NY 10028
Phone: 212 772 2400
Fax: 212 772 2459



Mariya Rozenblit, MD
(Hematology & Oncology)
Smilow Cancer Hospital Care Center
77 Lafayette Place
Phone: 203-863-3700
Fax: 203-863-3741



Erin Walsh, MD
(Ophthalmology)
Pediatric Specialty Center
500 West Putnam Ave.
Greenwich, CT 06830
Phone: 203 785 3360
Fax: 203-785-7694

Resignation/Non-Renewal of Privileges

Patrick Coady, MD (Ophthalmology)

Louis Cooper, DDS (Oral Surgery)

Cari Martone, APRN (Neurosurgery)

Sarah Pitt, PA (Surgery)

Sayed Syed, MD (Plastic Surgery)

In Memoriam

Elizabeth Ryan, MD (Anesthesiology) a member of Greenwich Hospital's Honorary Medical Staff passed away in April.