



NEW VENTURES

A newsletter for YHP Medicare Participants

Published by Yale Health Plan

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New medical director appointed

Michael Rigsby, M.D. assumed the role of medical director of Yale University Health Services starting in late September. He is a graduate of Yale School of Medicine, where he also completed his residency training in internal medicine and was a fellow in infectious diseases/AIDS. Currently, an associate professor on the Yale School of Medicine faculty, he is also a fellow at Jonathan Edwards College. Additionally, he is national director of HIV and hepatitis C programs as part of the Public Health Strategic Health Care Group in the Department of Veterans Affairs (based at the West Haven Veterans Affairs Medical Center). He has also been the director of the HIV Care Program at the VA Connecticut health care system as well as firm chief of the General Internal Medicine Firm in the VA Connecticut health care system.

Michael Rigsby is an exceptional clinician and medical educator, who will provide outstanding leadership as we look ahead to ambitious programs for improving care and service, planning for a new YUHS facility, completing our electronic medical record implementation and building on our successes in population medicine.

Clear communication central to safety

Ellen Budris, RN, MSN, Assistant Director, Clinical Administration

Assuring safety is an ongoing activity at Yale University Health Services. Safety is a right; it is also everyone's responsibility and it comes first in developing and implementing any procedure or system.

Accurate and timely communication has been identified as the number one challenge to safety in healthcare. Here are some steps you can take to maintain clear communication with your healthcare team:

Medications

Carry a list of the medications you are currently taking. YUHS will soon provide a small form which you can use and carry with you to assist in this process.

Know the doses and why you are taking these medications. Knowing more about the medication will assist you in taking it at the proper time (the most common error in taking medication) and in the proper fashion (e.g. with or without food).

Know which non-prescribed or over the counter (OTC) preparation you are taking. Taking multiple medications - whether prescribed, OTC or both - can lead to adverse reactions. So make sure your clinician knows at each visit your entire list.

At your office visit

Do not be offended when we ask your name and date of birth at each visit. We use these two identifiers to assure we have the correct patient at all times.

Write down your list of questions for your clinician before your office visit. Try ask the most pressing ones first.

Appointment times are not the only times to communicate with your clinician. Use Yale Health On Line to communicate your questions before or after an appointment.

Make sure you understand the important preventive measures to take to keep yourself safe and healthy with a particular diagnosis.

Identify a health goal per year for yourself and ask your clinician at your next visit how you can achieve it. Then reward yourself for reaching it!

Some of YUHS's many ongoing safety initiatives include:

Creation of an electronic medical record. Although we are still using the paper chart for notes, we are moving towards a totally electronic system. Phone messages are kept within the record electronically so any clinician seeing you can access previous calls you have made. Lab results are received into the electronic record, reducing the paper chase for results.

Medications are ordered electronically to reduce errors in reading and transcribing handwriting. All your ordered medications are listed in your electronic chart.

Creation of clinical practice guidelines based on research evidence, which assist staff across departments in providing safe, advanced care, especially in the area of prevention of disease.

Regular department staff meetings are held to discuss trends in care as well as to communicate quality reports and activities. Staff share educational resources at monthly medical staff meetings.

From the YUHS Pharmacy . . .

Medicare Participants: benefit year ends December 31st

Prescriptions at the YHP Pharmacy must be picked up within two weeks after the date they are filled. Prescriptions not picked up within that period are returned to stock. To be credited to the current benefit year, prescriptions must be filled by December 31st. This means that if you call in a prescription before December 31, but do not pick it up within two weeks it will be returned to stock. The prescription will have to be reprocessed in January and the cost will be charged to the new benefit year that begins on January 1.

Please remember that the annual \$100 deductible will apply on all prescriptions processed on or after January 1.

Pharmacy refills

When you need a refill on your YHP Pharmacy prescription for maintenance medication (for example, medications for allergy, arthritis, cholesterol, diabetes, hormone replacement, hypertension, headache and routine skin conditions) please call the Pharmacy first. The Pharmacy can initiate a message electronically to your clinician, who will check your record and reply to the Pharmacy with additional refills on your medication.

If the clinician decides on a course of action other than a refill authorization, a representative from the clinician's department will call you and the message will also be forwarded to the Pharmacy. Note that by state and federal law, certain prescriptions cannot be refilled and must be rewritten each time the medication is needed. Medication numbers beginning with the number 2 are narcotics, and for those items, a new signed prescription must be presented by the clinician to the Pharmacy.

The Internal Medicine Department has an automated voice mail on their main telephone number (203-432-0038) where a message can be left regarding prescriptions that begin with a 2. All other prescription refills are handled through the Pharmacy. For prescriptions written by clinicians in other departments, please speak to a department staff member and leave a message. The Pharmacy cannot take messages or send electronic messages for narcotic refills or refills that start with the number 2.

Patients can use their touchtone phones to enter a refill number (even if the bottle indicates no refills) into the automated refill line at the Pharmacy (203-432-0033) and follow the prompts to initiate an electronic message to their clinicians requesting a refill renewal. It is not necessary to speak directly to a Pharmacy staff member regarding renewing medication refills.

As always, certain medications are not considered routine and may require further follow-up with your clinician prior to renewing and refilling, but you can always call the Pharmacy if you have any questions. *information supplied by M Asarisi, RPh*

Traveling? Keep your meds in mind

Driving while fighting a cold? Be aware that the combination of antihistamines and alcohol may cause drowsiness and slow mental and motor skills.

If you are flying, keep medications in your purse or carry-on luggage so that you have access to them during your flight, if your flight is delayed, or if your luggage goes astray.

Provide for unexpected delays or changes in plans. Take more medication than what is required for the time you plan to be away. Always take your clinician's and pharmacist's phone numbers with you.

Keep a list of all your medications and the dosages with you, as well as those of all family members you're traveling with. This could be essential information in an emergency

Medications such as insulin may require that you carry a syringe, and you may need to carry your prescription with you to ensure that you can pass through airport security. The American Diabetes Association recommends that people with diabetes be prepared to provide airport security personnel with copies of prescriptions for diabetes medications and supplies as well as complete contact information for the prescriber.

From the Desk of Paul Genecin, MD

Since antiquity physicians have sworn the Hippocratic Oath, including this promise to uphold the patient's right to confidentiality: All that may come to my knowledge in the exercise of my profession or in daily commerce with men, which ought not to be spread abroad, I will keep secret and will never reveal.

Confidentiality and privacy are related but not synonymous. Privacy is an individual's right to keep certain matters secret. Clinical confidentiality is the responsibility of health care workers to safeguard patients' personal information. If a clinician cannot elicit a patient's intimate symptoms and concerns in confidence, the ability to provide appropriate treatment is compromised.

Since its inception in 1971, Yale Health Plan has recognized the challenges as well as the extreme importance of safeguarding patient privacy. As a University-owned health plan, we would be unable to deliver care to Yale's students, faculty and staff if they were concerned about whether professors, supervisors, classmates or colleagues had access to their private health records. We have also been committed to our unified medical record, not just because it is comprehensive, but also because it further protects private information by keeping it in one place rather than dispersed among many offices.

With the advent of the computer era, we have also been conscious of the importance of protecting electronic information. We foresaw that computers could transfer private information with remarkable efficiency - and potentially jeopardize confidentiality by transmitting personal data to inappropriate recipients. Starting in the 1970s, each information system enhancement at YHP has featured safeguards to minimize the risk of breeches of privacy. This is especially crucial as we move into the era of the electronic medical record (EMR.)

The Allscripts Electronic Medical Record (EMR), which we are implementing throughout YUHS, has numerous features built in to ensure patient privacy and confidentiality:

Our EMR is fully compliant with federal standards mandated by HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996). The system has a dedicated server with firewalls and 128-bit encryption built in to prevent access from the outside.

Unlike regular email, Yale Health On-Line, our electronic clinical communications system, features encrypted secure messaging for transmission of information between members and clinicians.

Viewing the EMR is restricted to need-to-know access as determined by professional licensure and specific job tasks. The EMR system maintains an audit trail of who has accessed information within the record.

We have carefully developed workplace policies, procedures and trainings to assure that the highest level of confidentiality is maintained by all YUHS staff and consultants.

The system makes full use of common security and privacy protection methods such as changing passwords, time-out locking of inactive workstations, and privacy screens.

The purpose of any medical record is to preserve clinical information so that it will be easily retrievable by any clinicians involved in your care. While a paper medical record can be in only one place at a time, and items such as lab results can be added only manually, the EMR receives data from multiple sources in real time and can be reviewed by any clinicians involved in a patient's care; its quality and accuracy can be continuously audited. The EMR is at least as confidential as a paper record and it facilitates higher quality care because of its legibility, searchability and its capacity to automatically trigger reminders and send results to patients.

As patients' lists of health problems and medications grow, the EMR ensures a higher level of patient safety by keeping updated and accurate lists of medication, drug allergies and interactions, immunization histories and other vital elements of the medical history. For patients with conditions for which the clinician tracks results or response to therapy over time (for example, diabetes, hypertension, elevated cholesterol), the EMR allows much faster and more accurate information display and reminders about treatments or examinations as they become due. As a tool for improving the quality and safety of healthcare, the EMR is widely regarded as one of medicine's most important recent technical advances. At YUHS we are looking forward to the enhancements to clinical care and service that our EMR will bring.

New Ventures

*published by
Yale Health Plan*

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Important phone numbers

Medicare/Retiree Coordinator	203-432-8134
Yale Retiree Prescription Administrator - Medco	1-800-230-0508
Yale Retiree Major Medical Administrator - Yale Health Plan	203-432-7513
YUHS Toll-Free Number (U.S./Canada)	1-877-947-2273
Member Services	203-432-0246
Internal Medicine	203-432-0038
Pharmacy	203-432-0033
Yale Benefits Office	203-432-5550
Social Security	1-800-772-1213
Medicare (enrollment/replace card)	1-800-772-1213
ITT Hartford* (billing/claims issues)	1-800-368-3653
American Financial Services* (to replace ITT Hartford cards)	203-949-1738

*Identify yourself as a Yale Retiree, group AGP-1816

Yale Health Plan holiday recess hours

Clinical and administrative departments will be open as follows during the winter holiday recess. Care for urgent problems is available after hours, weekends and holidays in the Urgent Care Department.

Friday, December 23: 8:30 am to 12:30 pm

Saturday, December 24: closed

Sunday, December 25: closed

Monday, December 26: closed

Tuesday, December 27: 8:30 am to 5:00 pm

Wednesday, December 28: 8:30 am to 5:00 pm

Thursday, December 29: 8:30 am to 5:00 pm

Friday, December 30: 8:30 am to 12:30 pm

Saturday, December 31: closed

Sunday, January 1: closed

Monday, January 2: closed

Pharmacy will be open as follows during the recess:

December 23, 26, 30: 8:30 am to 3:30 pm

December 24, 25: closed

December 27, 28, 29: 8:30 am to 5:30 pm

December 31, January 1: closed

January 2: 8:30 am to 3:30 pm

How do I replace a lost Medco card?

To replace a lost Medco card, call 1-800-230-0508 and identify yourself as a Yale University Retiree, RXGROUP - YALEURX. They will ask you for information to confirm your identity. A replacement card arrives in less than one week.

Yale Retirees and Medicare D

Enclosed you will find a copy of the letter from the Yale University Benefits Office which addressed the issue of Yale Retirees and Medicare D. Also enclosed with this issue of New Ventures is the Creditable Prescription Drug Coverage Notice that was included as part of the Benefits Office mailing. Please retain a copy of the letter and the notice for your files.

New Ventures

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Free parking is available both in the lot right next to 17 Hillhouse Avenue and in lot 37, just across Trumbull Street.