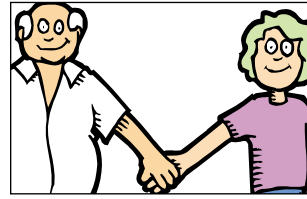


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NEWS FROM THE YALE HEALTH PLAN

VOL. IV NO. I

FEBRUARY 2001

New Medical Director Gears up for 21st Century

RHEA HIRSHMAN

Editor



Ravi Durvasula, *md*,
yuhs's new medical director

“There is no business as usual in today’s health care,” notes Paul Genecin, MD, the director of Yale University Health Services. As part of the ongoing process of developing the best systems for providing high quality, accessible and cost effective health care to the Yale community, Genecin recently announced the appointment of Ravi Durvasula, MD, as YHP’s new medical director, and the creation of a new position of associate director for medical affairs. That position will be filled by Moreson Kaplan, MD. (see insert article).

The medical director is part of the five person senior team at YUHS: the director (Genecin), the medical director (Durvasula), the associate director for medical affairs (Kaplan), the associate director for clinical services (Judith Madeux) and the deputy director for operations (Christopher Kielt).

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More hours in Student Medicine

For the convenience of our student population, the Student Medicine Department has extended its hours. The department is now open for appointments or walk-ins from 8:30 am to 6:30 pm Monday through Thursday and 8:30 am to 5:00 pm on Friday.

Early Immunizations Protect Children, Adults, Communities

JANE MILBERG, MSN, APRN

yhp Pediatrics Department

At one time or another, all of us have “gotten a shot,” either an injection of medication to help cure an existing illness or a vaccination to prevent the development of any of a number of health problems. In the United States and other industrialized countries, the vast majority of children are immunized against a range of infectious diseases to which children are susceptible. Adults can catch these diseases too and many common childhood infectious diseases, such as mumps and measles, can have very serious consequences in adults. Childhood immunizations are important in protecting not only the individual child, but the larger community.

An immunization introduces into the body a weakened or killed virus or bacteria or, occasionally, a deactivated toxin from the infectious agent that causes the particular disease. Administration of

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MEDICAL DIRECTOR

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While the director functions as the CEO, the medical director is primarily responsible for overseeing the YUHS clinics. He supervises programs to improve quality of clinical care and service to all members. "There was an enormous number of applications for this position from all over the country," Genecin notes, "and it was clear that Dr. Durvasula is uniquely qualified. In addition to being highly respected in his field, he has tremendous energy and very strong communications skills. He is a committed doctor who cares very deeply about medicine and is firmly rooted in clinical practice. He looks at systems always in relation to how to make things better for patients, and he is very comfortable in the role of physician as teacher."

Durvasula, who has been a consulting physician in Urgent Care and Internal Medicine since 1992, was named YHP's chief of clinical resources in January of 2000. Born in India, Durvasula grew up in Australia, the U.S. and Canada, where he attended McGill University in Montreal for both undergraduate and medical studies. He was chief medical resident during his residency at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, which he describes as "quite the opposite city, climactically and culturally."

Durvasula moved to New Haven in 1992 to do a fellowship in clinical infectious diseases at Yale University School of Medicine. He is on the research faculty in the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, working in the Yale-MacArthur Center for Molecular Parasitology. Before coming to the health plan, he taught microbiology at Yale University School of Medicine, supervised research projects, and worked as an attending physician at Yale New Haven Hospital.

Durvasula says that he hopes to see YUHS become "an innovator in health care" and cites the recent Cold Care Center as a YUHS project that is already receiving interest from other organizations.

Important telephone numbers

Urgent Care	432-0123
<i>Open 24 hrs/day, seven days per week</i>	
Toll Free	1-877-YHP-CARE
Information	432-0246
Pharmacy	432-0033
<i>Hours of operation</i>	
Monday–Friday	7:30 AM–6:30 PM
Saturday	8:30 AM–3:30 PM
Patient Representative	432-0109
Medicare/Retiree Coordinator	432-8134
Outpatient Referrals/Claims	432-0250
Inpatient Care Facility	432-0001

in touch

Kaplan to Assume New Role



Moreson Kaplan, MD, who has been with YUHS as a physician since 1971 and who served as medical director from 1979–1982 and again from 1990–2001, has been appointed to the newly-created position of associate director for medical affairs. "Being able to retain Dr. Kaplan on the senior team is a wonderful opportunity," notes YUHS director Paul Genecin, MD. "He has an

enormous amount of knowledge of the organization as well as a very strong clinical focus and is a committed advocate for patients." In this new position, Kaplan will be advisor to the director and to the medical director and will provide physician oversight for the Inpatient Care Facility and the Pharmacy. He will also continue to function as the chief for both the medical specialties and surgical specialties areas and, in collaboration with the medical director, he will be a physician liaison to the Member Services and Claims departments.

In discussing his approach as medical director, he notes that "In the 21st century, we are delivering care more broadly. In addition to the individual appointment with the clinician, delivering the best care will include developing 'population-based' programs such as diabetes education and management, vaccination projects, development of technology resources such as electronic records, and increased health education initiatives throughout the Yale community. I think that greater patient education about both

health maintenance and disease management is essential, and I think that the internet and other electronic media can be very useful in helping to increase the accessibility of medical care. I believe very strongly in the collaboration between the patient and the clinician."



from the desk of

PAUL GENECCIN, MD

DIRECTOR, YALE UNIVERSITY HEALTH SERVICES

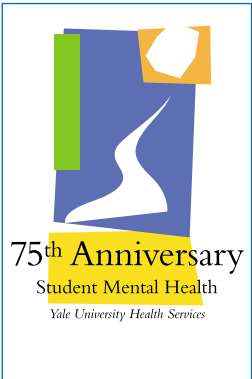
By now you probably know about the appointment of Ravi Durvasula, MD as our new YUHS medical director. I am delighted to welcome Dr. Durvasula to this position and hope that you will soon have a chance to become acquainted with him. The role of medical director is pivotal; this individual is responsible for many of the areas that have the greatest direct impact on our members. The medical director supervises the clinics, addresses the larger goal of improving the health of our population, and is responsible for clinical and intellectual leadership, oversight of clinical quality, and improvements in care and service. I'd like to share with you some of my thoughts about the medical director search process, which required focusing on our most important values as a health care organization.

For the past decade, Dr. Moreson Kaplan served with unique distinction as YUHS's medical director. When he decided last summer that it was time for him to move into a new role we faced with some trepidation the prospect of searching for a new medical director. Dr. Kaplan's assistance in the recruitment process and transition has been a source of great strength for YUHS, and I feel fortunate that he will continue to be part of the YUHS senior management team.

We were surprised by the deluge of applications for the medical director position – over a hundred superbly qualified applicants whose diverse backgrounds provided us with a remarkable range of choices. As YUHS is foremost a clinical service organization, I felt it essential that we recruit an active clinician. The individual would need to be at home in the

university environment, so a firm academic grounding was essential. The YUHS mission to provide care to Yale's students, faculty and staff was uppermost in my thinking. Our unique strengths including our staff model, our small size and our physician leadership were vital considerations.

I worked closely with a team of colleagues to evaluate each of the applicants with these values in mind. Dr. Durvasula has the ideal background for the role of YUHS medical director. In addition to all the qualities I've listed, he also brings outstanding strengths as a leader, a teacher and a true innovator. In coming issues of Yale Health Care, we will be sharing with you some of Dr. Durvasula's plans to improve care and service to our members. As always, we welcome your suggestions about our programs and services.



Mental Health and Counseling at yuhs: 75 Years of Constancy and Change

RHEA HIRSHMAN

Editor

On December 1, 2000, YUHS celebrated the 75th anniversary of its Division of Mental Hygiene. In 1925 when James Angell, the president of Yale, appointed the first University psychiatrist, psychiatry was still a young field and college mental health services were virtually unknown. Even at that early date, "Yale, through its faculty and alumnae, had been interested and involved in mental health issues,"

according to Lorraine Siggins, MD, the psychiatrist-in-chief. In fact, Siggins notes, the national "mental hygiene" movement of the early 1900s was spearheaded by a Yale alumnus – Clifford Beers, class of 1897.

Beers and his colleagues advocated for more research into and improved treatment of psychological disorders. In addition, Siggins notes, "Another aspect of the

mental hygiene movement was to emphasize work with children, adolescents and students with the idea that attention to early difficulties and to developmental issues might help prevent or reduce subsequent problems." As the movement came into full flower after the end of World War I, individuals associated with Yale were actively involved and many Yale faculty members from a variety of disciplines – not just psychology and psychiatry – sat on the board of the National Committee for Mental Hygiene. So it was natural that the department, which has functioned without interruption since the appointment of that first

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questions, answers



By answering your questions, this column will help you get the most out of your YHP membership.

*Send your questions to:
Member Services Q & A,
Yale Health Plan,
17 Hillhouse Ave.,
P.O. Box 208237
New Haven, CT
06520-8237.*

*We'll get them answered
by someone "in the know."*

Did you ever wonder what happens if an athlete is injured during a Yale home game, or if a visitor to Yale commencement faints during the festivities? While Yale University Health Services is familiar as the building at 17 Hillhouse Avenue, the YUHS presence is also felt at a variety of Yale events, as well as at community activities which the university hosts or participates in. Some examples:

At **Yale home athletic events** (varsity football, soccer, lacrosse, ice hockey and junior varsity football), clinicians, paramedics and athletic trainers are available to provide emergency medical services to spectators and referees as well as to athletes. At football games, medical tents are set up; these contain everything from cardiac monitors/defibrillators to ice packs. Ambulances are always on standby.

Yale commencements involve over 10,000 participants and spectators. A fully-equipped medical aid station, staffed by YUHS physicians and paramedics from local companies, is set up near the main stage. Paramedics are also stationed at other locations, while university police can receive and relay calls for medical assistance.

The annual **freshman assembly** in Woolsey Hall is also covered by YUHS.

During **alumni reunions**, alumni are provided with information about how to access medical care while on campus, including obtaining some services at the YUHS building.

Special events require planning for health emergencies as well. The recent Tercentennial celebration brought thousands of visitors to Yale, and YUHS staff were on hand to respond to medical emergencies. Whenever a new Yale president is appointed, YUHS coordinates medical coverage on-site at the convocation. When Yale hosted the Connecticut Special Olympics from 1987-1992, YUHS helped provide management of the medical services, while many YUHS staff members volunteered their medical skills. And when the Special Olympics World Games were held here in 1995, YUHS coordinated coverage for all sites, and the YUHS Inpatient Care Facility (ICF) was made available for participants who became ill or injured.

Did You Know...

Yale Health Plan celebrates its 30th anniversary of service this summer. Watch for celebratory events and a special anniversary issue of *yale health care*.

MENTAL HEALTH AND COUNSELING

continued from page 3

psychiatrist in 1925, be named the Division of Mental Hygiene.

Currently, the department – which is staffed by psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, clinical social workers – offers counseling, psychotherapy, and mental health treatment to all students. Crisis intervention is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. While there have been enormous changes in knowledge about and treatment for a range of psychological difficulties and disorders, Siggins emphasizes that much about what concerns students in particular has remained constant. The questions are timeless: Who am I? Where am I going? Who do I want to be? Whom do I want to be with? How do I become my own person and yet keep continuity with my family? What has changed is how these concerns manifest themselves at differ-

ent historical periods and in different cultural contexts.

Those cultural contexts have changed both because of shifts in the world outside the University and because of the increasing diversity – by gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background – of the Yale population. Howard Blue, MD, the department's clinical coordinator, notes: "One of the byproducts of increasing diversity has to do with challenging how you view a person who is a member of any particular 'group'. For instance, black students can be native Africans, African-Americans, African-Caribbeans, multiracial, people from Latin America who identify as black, and they come from a wide variety of cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. One has to consider cultural issues in one's thinking about how to work with someone, but doing that work also comes down to the basic personal issues the individual is struggling with."

In recent years, the department has expanded services into the colleges and University community offering programs addressing a variety of psychological and mental health issues. The staff also offers programs to faculty and administrative staff about student developmental issues, helps train student peer educators, and provides educational programming for adults in the university on issues such as child development and stress management. While ongoing treatment is not offered to non-student members, they do have access to consultations as well as to crisis intervention services, with referrals available for continued treatment outside of YUHS.

As it celebrates its 75th anniversary and confronts the changes and challenges of the 21st century, the Division of Mental Hygiene will, in the years ahead, continue to build on its rich tradition of innovative programs and dedication to Yale students and the Yale community.

IMMUNIZATIONS

continued from page 1



these substances orally or through injection triggers the immune system to produce specific protective antibodies. The presence in the bloodstream of these antibodies will protect the recipient from developing the disease in the future.

The protection against infectious diseases offered by a timely program of immunizations is central to keeping children healthy. As part of caring for the youngest patients, the YHP Pediatrics Department keeps track of the exams and immunizations that children need and guides families in scheduling the necessary visits.

The majority of childhood immunizations are given before the child reaches the age of two. These include: chicken pox; mumps; measles; pertussis (whooping cough); diphtheria; tetanus; polio; German measles (rubella); hemophilus influenza type B (a bacteria that was the most common cause of meningitis and of epiglottitis, a rare but very serious disease that can cause difficulty breathing); and Hepatitis B. The immunizations for pertussis, diphtheria and tetanus are given in one vaccine, called DTaP, and the immunizations for measles, mumps and rubella are combined into a vaccine referred to as the MMR. In addition to the initial shots, boosters may be required. Boosters are given from several months to several years after the initial vaccination, and tetanus boosters should be given at ten-year intervals throughout the life span.

Vaccination guidelines issued by national medical organizations are reviewed continuously at YHP and all recommended vaccinations are available to our members. The newest vaccine recommendation for children under two is

for the recently-licensed pneumococcal vaccine, which protects against bacterial meningitis as well as many cases of pneumonia, blood infection and ear infection. While the flu vaccine is not routinely given to young children, it is recommended for those with chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, asthma or heart disease.

Some vaccinations may cause mild side effects, including soreness at the injection site, fatigue and a low-grade fever. Children's acetaminophen is helpful in relieving these symptoms. Any unusual reactions such as a rash or high fever should be reported to the clinician.

Keeping accurate records of a child's vaccinations is important both for health reasons and because school systems, day care providers, summer camps and other facilities usually require proof of certain vaccinations. The Pediatrics Department is available to assist members in any way possible so that children can receive the protection against serious illness that regular vaccinations provide.

web/information

WEBSITES

In this issue, instead of books, we're including some useful web sites related to children's health and safety.

www.cdc.gov/ncidod/hip/abc/facts.htm

This section of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's site focuses on childhood diseases.

www.aap.org

This is the site for the American Academy of Pediatrics. A consumer-oriented "You and Your Family" section features a number of online booklets endorsed by the academy, covering

such topics as air bag and car safety, sudden infant death syndrome and the recommended immunization schedule.

<http://ificinfo.health.org/index3.htm>

This site, produced by the International Food Information Council Foundation, provides information on healthy eating habits, how to deal with food advertisements, and when to start infants on solid foods.

<http://www.cpsc.gov/kids/kids.html>

This site includes a section of information on potentially hazardous products



developed for children and adolescents, including tips on bicycle, roller skate, baseball and skateboard safety.

www.fda.gov/opacom/catalog/vaccine.html

This fact sheet from the US Food and Drug Administration answers most common questions about vaccinations.

INFORMATION

Keep in touch

When someone else cancels an appointment and you have indicated an interest in coming in at that time, we will call you and leave a message to let you know that the time has become available. It is very important that you return the call to let us know whether or not you are still interested in making the appointment. If your plans have changed and you are unable to take advantage of that opening, there is probably another member who would like to use it. But we can't help that person unless you call us back. So, as a courtesy to other members, please respond.

Glad you're here

Welcome to those who joined YHP during the recent open enrollment period. You will be receiving a packet containing a Member Handbook, a list of primary care clinicians and member identification card/s. The handbook contains important information about using the health plan, so please read it carefully and use it for reference. Call the Member Services Department at (203)432-0246 if you have any questions about benefits or if you need help choosing a primary care clinician.



Check your pressure

YUHS offers free walk-in blood pressure monitoring to all members of the Yale community. This program includes individual instruction methods for controlling hypertension. No appointment is necessary. Just walk in (with or without a clinician's referral) on Tuesdays or Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. in room 406. For more information call the Office of Health Promotion and Education at 203-432-0093.

Primary care

The experience of our members shows that health care is best provided through a strong relationship with a primary care clinician. In addition to identifying for all adult members a clinician in Internal Medicine, YHP has now identified a clinician for each adult female member in the Obstetrics/Gynecology Department. We are beginning this process for each child in the Pediatrics Department. If you have not already done so, please take a moment to let our Member Services staff (203-432-0246) know your choice(s) for primary care clinician and we will do our best to honor your preference.

yale health care

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17 Hillhouse Avenue
New Haven, CT 06520-8237
(203) 432-0246 • www.yale.edu/uhs
email: member.services@yale.edu

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Harold Shapiro
Photos

healthy ideas



Survey your medicine chest

Most of us use more over the counter medications as cold and flu season takes hold. This makes winter the ideal time for reviewing the contents of your medicine chest.

- Remove all expired medications; they can degrade over time and become ineffective. Degraded medications can also cause health problems.
- Restock essential items in adequate quantities, but do not purchase so much that you run the risk of having even more expired items sitting around next year.

And note: Moisture hastens the breakdown of medications, making the ubiquitous bathroom medicine chest one of the worst places to keep them. Instead, keep medications in a place that is dry, away from sunlight, and out of the reach of children – such as an upper shelf of a hall closet. Use the bathroom cabinet for non-perishables like bandaids and soap.

Cool kids

Keeping children warm and safe in cold weather requires both planning and vigilance. Young children can get so excited about playing in the snow that they may not let caregivers know that they are cold. And adults should not assume just because they are comfortable outside that the children are. Other tips:

- If you are outdoors with children, bring them inside periodically to warm up.
- Dress children warmly, in several thin layers. Make sure that head, neck and hands are covered.
- Avoid taking infants outside in temperatures under 40 degrees, as they lose body heat rapidly.
- Watch out for frostbite. Early symptoms include numbness, clumsiness, decreased alertness and being flushed.

- If any of these are evident, get the child inside immediately. Warm them up with warm drinks, dry clothes, extra blankets. Have them move affected body parts to increase blood supply. If symptoms are more severe (numbness, pain, blistered skin), call a clinician while you take the other steps. Never apply intense heat to a frostbitten area; use slow warming.
- Teach good ice skating habits: skate in the same direction as the rest of the crowd; never skate alone; never go out on ice that an adult has not approved.
- Do not let children ride in a sled pulled by a motorized vehicle. Make sure that the number of children on a sled does not exceed manufacturers recommendation.

Safe Seniors

Older people, who may be less physically resilient, also face some winter hazards:

- Older adults are no more susceptible to flu than others, but complications from the flu can be more frequent and more severe. A flu shot offers good protection from the virus – although it does not offer total immunity.

- Pneumonia is one of the flu's complications. Those over 62 (and those with chronic illnesses) can protect themselves by getting the pneumovax (pneumonia vaccine).
- As we age, there is a decrease in our capacity to adjust to changes in light. Keeping a small light on in the house can help reduce the degree of adjustment necessary between bright and dark places.
- More darkness means more chance of accidents. Make sure that rugs lie flat and are secure, that objects are not left in unfamiliar places where they can become obstacles, and that there is adequate outside lighting around the home.
- To keep fit, consider exercising indoors. Avoid snow shoveling and other extremely strenuous activity unless you are really in shape for it.
- We get dehydrated in the winter too, and need at least eight glasses of non-caffeinated, non-alcoholic beverages daily.

the yhp staff



KAREN OTTERSON, RN, MSN joined YHP this past July as assistant director of nursing for the Inpatient Care Facility (ICF) – a role which will include staff development responsibilities.

A self-described “Midwest transplant,” Otterson grew up in a small Wisconsin town and earned both her bachelor’s and

master’s degrees in nursing at the University of Wisconsin in Eau Claire. While her clinical background is in emergency/trauma, mental health and cardiac nursing, she is particularly interested in nursing education and has both taught in the classroom and functioned as a clinical instructor to nursing students. Prior to coming to Connecticut she managed the staff education department of a large hospital in Minnesota.

calendar

ONGOING WELLNESS PROGRAMS

YHP Cancer Support Group

Life Options is a support group for adult yhp members diagnosed with cancer, regardless of type of cancer or stage of disease. The group meets weekly with a facilitator. There are three 15-week programs each year. Members can enroll in a consecutive series of meetings. Funded partially by the Edith S. Hallo Fund and by a small weekly fee charged to each participant. To enroll or for more information, contact the facilitator, Mona Felts, MSW, at 203-432-0290.

Adult CPR Classes

Adult CPR classes are held monthly. For information, call 203-432-1892.

Early Pregnancy Classes

Held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month from 10:30–11:30 in room 405 for YHP members. To register, call the Ob/Gyn Department at 203-432-0222 or stop by the appointment desk. We encourage you to bring a supportive person.

Weight Watchers at Work

Mondays, 12:15–1:00 in room 405. You can join any time. For information, call 203-432-1892.

HIV+ Peer Support Group

Meets one evening a month at YUHS. For more information, contact Debra Boltas, Ph.D. at 203-432-0290.

Blood Pressure Checks

Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00–11:00 in room 406. Open to the Yale community free of charge, by referral or on a walk-in basis. For info, call 203-432-0093.

Post-partum Reunions

Held on the 3rd Friday of each month from 10:00–11:30 in room 405. Bring your new babies to this great support network for all new moms! Conducted by Wendy Madore, RNC. Call the Ob/Gyn Dept. (203-432-0222) to register.

Wondering whether you should get the pneumovax, which protects against pneumonia? While you should check with your clinician, the general guidelines are that the vaccine should be taken by those in the following categories:

- anyone over 62
- adults with chronic heart, lung, liver or kidney disease
- adults with diabetes
- adults with compromised immune systems due to long term steroid or chemotherapy treatments.

You may obtain the vaccine at the walk-in clinics held in YHP's Immunization Department on the 4th floor. Hours are 8:30-4:30 every weekday except Tuesday.

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17 Hillhouse Avenue
P.O. Box 208237
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Please remember that free parking for yhp members is available both in the lot right next to 17 Hillhouse Avenue and in parking lot 37, just across Trumbull Street.

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