Taking care of your mental health is an important part of health care. The Covid pandemic was a source of stress and strain for so many of us. In large numbers, people turned to mental health services, for help with coping with the emotional challenges of Covid. Mental health providers helped so many learn to adapt and thrive in a very different world than what we had known before. Now, the increased need for the expertise of therapists and clinicians continues.

“The need for mental health services has dramatically gone up, for adults and children, and continues to do so,” says Boris Meandzija, MD, Chief, of Behavioral Health. “As a consequence, fewer private practice providers in the community are open to taking new patients at any given time.”

New Ways to Connect with Mental Health Care
You improve your life in a variety of areas. Magellan’s Yale Health-specific call center is always a good place to start. 24 hours a day, seven days a week, members can speak to a licensed clinician to assess their concerns, and get a list of appropriate providers. Dr. through the Magellan Yale Health website, members can go to the “Find Care” tab, and search for a clinician, selecting for location, gender, and specialty area, to find the best match for their needs. However, the high demand for services has made getting to that first appointment difficult. “Sometimes patients have to call more than ten providers to find an open appointment,” says Dr. Meandzija, and the next available appointment with an open clinician might not be immediate. If members choose, they can get connected more quickly by asking the Magellan call center clinician to find the first available appointment. While more expedient, members won’t be able to choose the time, location, or provider.

To get members connected to more timely care, Magellan has introduced a telehealth option. Through Magellan Provider Services, members who contact the call center can be connected to a Magellan licensed clinician through telehealth appointment — by phone or video call — typically within a week. “Many people find it just as helpful as meeting with someone in an office,” says Dr. Meandzija. “But it is up to the patient to decide what kind of care is right for them, and the call center clinician can help with that decision.”

Seeking therapy is not the only option for members who want to find a way to strengthen their mental health. Magellan’s Digital Emotional Wellbeing Program, powered by NeuroFlow, is available through Magellan’s website, and offers strategies for members to improve their mental health and overall wellbeing. The program provides interactive activities and online cognitive behavioral therapy that can help treat a number of problems including anxiety and depression, and is free and confidential. The program offers guides to breathing exercises and meditation, and allows members to track mood, sleep, stress, and pain, and view their improvement as they progress through this online program, which syncs with other health trackers such as Fitbit or Google Fit (see below to learn more).

Yale Health’s Behavioral Health Department is dedicated to improving members’ mental health more than ever in these challenging times. Members who have questions or concerns about our services can contact: Boris Meandzija, MD, Chief of Behavioral Health borislav.meandzija@yale.edu
Cheryl Doebbrick, PhD, Behavioral Health Manager cheryl.doebbrick@yale.edu

Magellan Healthcare’s enhanced Digital Emotional Wellbeing Program, powered by NeuroFlow


Strengthen your mind-body connection through interactive activities and education for overall wellbeing and participate in evidence-based cognitive behavioral therapy through Magellan’s Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)-approved modules. Available through the Magellan website, this program is completely free and confidential. It can help you improve your life in a variety of areas.

**KEY FEATURES**

- Complete activities such as breathing exercises, meditation, yoga or journaling.
- Track mood, sleep, stress and pain, and see your progress.
- Complete confidential, self-paced digital cognitive behavioral therapy for anxiety and depression.
- Connect to virtual therapy.
- Sync with other trackers like Fitbit, Garmin and MyFitnessPal through Apple Health or Google Fit.

What we do here is truly remarkable: expert care in a patient-partnered environment, with active input from our members every day!

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*From the Desk of Jason Fish, Yale Health CEO*

It is my great pleasure and honor to join Yale Health and its thriving community of members and caregivers.

In the few months since I arrived, I have enjoyed getting to know our team here at 55 Lock Street and our members. The Yale Health community has a vibrant spirit, and I am excited to be a member of the team. Before coming to New Haven, I oversaw the clinical quality and efficiency of one of the largest Accountable Care Organizations in the U.S. while continuing to provide clinical care as a primary care provider across two academic medical centers.

The combination of caring for patients and healthcare administration experience has given me many insights into how patients and providers can work together to deliver the best and most efficient healthcare possible. To that end, I will make sure members have a voice in all aspects of their care. I will also work to ensure appropriate access to our many excellent resources and services at 55 Lock Street and with our partners in the Yale School of Medicine and Yale New Haven Health System.

Taking advantage of our home at one of the nation’s top academic universities, Yale Health will continue to deliver outstanding care into the future. Safeguarding our members’ needs will remain critical. Yale Health embraces a collaborative approach where our members actively participate as partners in all aspects of their healthcare journey.

We acknowledge the valuable insights our patients bring to the table, respecting their expertise in sharing firsthand experiences and concerns related to their health. This commitment ensures that feedback is integrated into the care they receive.

Since joining, I have come to witness that what we do here is truly remarkable: expert care in a patient-partnered environment, with active input from our members every day, regarding not only their care but their overall experience at Yale Health. This partnership allows Yale Health to advance and remain a trusted partner in our members’ health.

I look forward to all the good things ahead of us and wish you health and happiness this season and throughout 2024!

Jason Fish, MD, MSHS, MS-MAS
Chief Executive Officer

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borislav.meandzija@yale.edu

*yalehealth.yale.edu*
Winter Respiratory Updates

Getting vaccinated is still essential to preventing Covid this winter

It is safe to get a flu and Covid vaccine at the same time,” says Wilson. Select Yale Health clinics will offer both vaccines simultaneously. Vaccines can be scheduled through the Yale Health Flu/Covid Finder. Anyone unable to self-schedule through the Flu/Covid Finder may call 203-432-6604 for assistance.

After vaccination, the next important action that members can take, Wilson says, is to keep a supply of at-home rapid antigen self-tests stocked up. Widescale PCR testing is no longer offered at Yale, and will be only available through provider order. If members experience cough or cold symptoms, it is important to self-test before calling to request in-person appointments, as triage nurses will ask over the phone if you have done so. It is also important to remember: “One negative test does not mean you do not have Covid,” says Wilson. Taking a second test, 48 hours after the first test is a key step in confirming a positive result. Though rapid antigen tests are no longer free of charge to Yale Health members, they are available for sale at the Yale Health pharmacy, at approximately half the retail price.

It is safe, effective, and recommended for everyone over the age of 6 months.

There are many reasons you might need to reach us, and many ways to do it. Here is a guide to show you the best way to get in touch so we can help you in the quickest way possible. We are always here to help!

Contacting Yale Health

Things to Remember

- Call Yale’s provider voice messages if you’re unable to come in or can’t talk on the phone
- Speak slowly and clearly
- Leave your name, phone number, and message

For Questions About...

- COVID-19 vaccine
- Flu vaccine
- Booster shot
- Flu symptoms
- Covid symptoms
- Antigen tests
- Test results
- Paxlovid
- Paxlovid side effects
- Service changes
- Your health
- Your health in the community

Stay Connected with Yale Health

@yalehealthcenter
Yale Health Center
@yalehealth
@yalehealth
linkedin.com/company/yalehealth

We Want to Hear from You — We are Better Together

There are many ways, as members and as patients, you can support your care by communicating with your healthcare team:

- When you visit Yale Health, remember that your provider is ready to hear your questions and concerns. Any information you share with us about your health will help us better care for you. Feel free to be open and honest when you communicate with your provider.

- Consider what your health goals are for the coming year, and what you need and expect from your providers to help you achieve them. What kind of support will you need to achieve your goals?

- Please respond to the Press Ganey survey request you receive in your email following an appointment. The information that comes from these anonymous member surveys helps us get our members’ perspective at Yale Health and make changes to improve our services based on those comments: tell us what’s working and what’s not working so we know what went right, what was helpful, what did not help, or what did not meet your expectations.

- Take a look at our newly redesigned website, and our Member Handbook: both have answers to many questions you might have and are full of information on what services we have to offer, and how to take advantage of them.

- Participate in our Zoom classes that can answer your questions and educate you about specific health topics, such as diabetes or pregnancy and childbirth. On our website, you can also take a look at Emmi Educational Videos, free and available on a wide range of topics. The information you get will help you get more out of your health care, and help you communicate with your provider about your health.

- Member Services is available by phone (203-432-0246) or email (member.services@yale.edu), to answer your questions and hear your concerns about your coverage and care, or even to hear complaints about a particularly helpful provider or staff member.
Joint Commission Re-Accreditation Achieved

Yale Health receives best score ever on 2023 survey

EARLIER THIS YEAR, YALE HEALTH Achieved reaccreditation by the Joint Commission, successfully demonstrating compliance with the highest national standards for safe and high-quality health care for our patients. This recognition is the gold standard in healthcare, showing we are fully committed to continually improving and advancing patient care.

Every three years, the Joint Commission, an independent non-profit organization, performs an unannounced organization-wide inspection to survey and inspect all of Yale Health’s facilities and services, carefully reviewing more than 1,800 standards set by the Joint Commission. Not every health care organization meets these standards, which places Yale Health among the top healthcare organizations in the United States. This year, Yale Health achieved its best performance in more than three decades of surveys.

During their three-day visit, highly trained surveyors spoke directly with patients and staff, reviewed a vast amount of clinical and operational data, and visited all primary care areas, as well as all specialty departments and other support services. Surveyors also shadowed our patients’ visits, to determine how well the patient was cared for throughout the visit, from the reception desk to the exam room to the blood draw area, diagnostic imaging, and pharmacy. Shadowing our patients allowed the surveyors to examine how well Yale Health measures up to their standards in infection control, equipment maintenance, as well as in providing a patient-centered experience and positive environment.

While the survey occurs every three years, “Yale Health’s entire team is continuously preparing to meet the Joint Commission’s high standards at any time and ensure the care is the best it can be,” said Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Manager Debra Tangarone, MBA, a member of Yale Health’s accreditation team. “It’s a continuous effort to make sure we are up to the standards. When the Joint Commission arrives, we are confident we have done the work, and we are always looking to improve and keep up with protocol updates.”

Yale Health has achieved two distinct reaccreditation recognitions during this survey: Primary Care Medical Home and Ambulatory Care, to reflect the variety of ways we serve our patient community. At the end of its visit, the survey team presented Yale Health with an insightful set of observations and recommendations to help strengthen care looking to the next three years, and whatever challenges might arise.

The 2023 reaccreditation is particularly notable following the complex, quick-moving challenges experienced by Yale Health employees and patients in the years during the Covid pandemic. “Considering the very complex challenges we experienced during the past three years with a pandemic, this is a major accomplishment,” said Nanci Fortgang, RN, MPA, CMPE, Chief Clinical Operations Officer, who served as Interim Director of Yale Health during the accreditation process.

“Having these surveyors come and share how impressed they were with our spirit, really was a great moment for us.” That spirit recognized by the Joint Commission’s accreditation translates into comprehensive, compassionate care for all our members.

Yale Health Launches Pharmacy App

A new app connects Yale Health members to the pharmacy with just a click.

In the Yale Health Pharmacy app, patients can:
- Request refills directly from the pharmacy, without needing to contact your clinician directly.
- View an active list of your medications, and track how many refills remain on all your prescriptions.
- When also signed up for text messaging you will be alerted to when your prescriptions are ready.
- View and refill all your prescriptions from any clinician including those outside of Yale Health.

Yale Health Welcomes New Providers

New Website Launched

If you have been on Yale Health’s website recently, you surely have noticed its fresh look. But that is not all that has changed: the new site has been redesigned to make it easier and quicker for members to find the information they need, with fewer clicks. The new website was designed with patients and members at its core, and we asked several members, from our Patien and Family Council, for their input during development.

Now, members can begin on the homepage with a guided search, which will help members navigate to the information they need by directing their search to the most pertinent results. It will be easier than ever to find information about health conditions and Yale physicians and departments, as well as to book appointments, order medication refills, and access MyChart.

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