

Yale Health Center  
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New Haven, CT 06511

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# YALE HEALTH CARE

news from Yale Health  
winter 2024

**Connecting  
Mental Health Needs**

**Respiratory Updates**

**Joint Commission  
Accreditation**

**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU  
PHARMACY ORDERING APP  
DIGITAL EMOTIONAL WELLBEING**

## YALE HEALTH CARE

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winter 2024



### KEEP IN MIND

#### Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act Services

The Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act (WHCRA) of 1998 provides benefits for mastectomy related services including all stages of reconstruction and surgery to achieve symmetry between the breasts, prostheses, and complications resulting from a mastectomy, including lymphedemas.

For more information, visit [dol.gov/agencies/ebsa/laws-and-regulations/laws/whcra](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ebsa/laws-and-regulations/laws/whcra) or speak to your primary care provider.

#### Pharmacy Hours

The Yale Health Pharmacy hours are:

**Monday – Friday** 8:00 am – 6:00 pm  
**Saturday** 8:00 am – 3:00 pm  
**Sunday** Closed

Please check [yalehealth.yale.edu](https://yalehealth.yale.edu) for any changes, closings or holiday schedules.

Published by Yale Health  
55 Lock Street  
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Yale HEALTH  
[yalehealth.yale.edu](https://yalehealth.yale.edu)

*Boris Meandzija, MD, Chief,  
and Cheryl Doebrick, PhD,  
Manager of Behavioral Health*



## New Ways to Connect with Mental Health Care

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."

CONNECTING MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

**CONNECTING MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS**  
CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Yale Health is working with the health plan's mental health service provider, Magellan, to ease this strain. Here is how members can get connected to the mental health care they need, in both traditional and new, innovative ways:

**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. Or, 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](mailto:borislav.meandzija@yale.edu)

Cheryl Doebrick, PhD, Behavioral Health Manager  
[cheryl.doebrick@yale.edu](mailto:cheryl.doebrick@yale.edu)

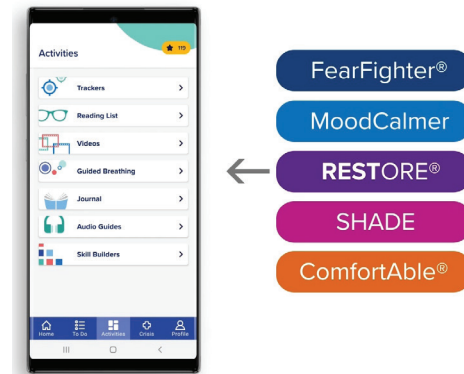
## Magellan Healthcare's enhanced Digital Emotional Wellbeing Program, powered by NeuroFlow

Magellan Healthcare's new Digital Emotional Wellbeing Program, powered by NeuroFlow, launched on January 1, 2022. Have you registered yet? Take control of your whole health—life, mind and body.

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.



Scan QR code to get started today!



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

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



# Winter Respiratory Updates

Getting vaccinated is still essential to preventing Covid this winter



Madeline Wilson MD, FACP, Chief Campus Health Officer and Chief Quality Officer.



**RECENT VISITORS TO** Yale Health have certainly noticed some changes in Covid procedures, since the expiration of the federal Covid Public Health Emergency last May. **Treatments, vaccines, and measures to reduce the risk of spread of Covid have become well-established and readily available.** Masks are no longer required for every patient and visitor to our facility, and testing procedures have greatly changed: gone are the testing sites set up all over the area to accommodate the great need for testing at the height of the pandemic.

Despite this easing of protocols, Covid remains a concern to the community, and a priority for Yale Health. As winter arrives, cases are ticking up at Yale and beyond, and variants continue to emerge. Experts predict, as in previous years, a fall or winter increase in Covid cases, which will likely coincide with waves of other respiratory viruses such as Influenza (flu) and Respiratory syncytial virus (known as RSV).

At Yale Health, our commitment to meeting our members' needs for Covid testing, vaccination, and timely treatment is ongoing. "We continue to be very vigilant

about Covid and responsive to what is going on in the community," said Madeline Wilson MD, FACP, Chief Campus Health Officer and Chief Quality Officer.

**To keep Covid at bay this winter, there are some necessary steps to take.** "It is important to get all the vaccines that you are eligible for, including the flu vaccine and the updated Covid vaccine," said Dr. Wilson. Yale Health is once again offering free flu and Covid vaccines to Yale faculty, staff, students, and Yale Health members through vaccination clinics.

The recently released updated Covid vaccine, or booster, that responds to newer strains of the disease is recommended for everyone over the age of 6 months by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This year Yale Health is offering Moderna mRNA vaccine in its clinics.

In addition to the Covid booster, the flu vaccine is reformulated every year to protect against the most common strains expected during the upcoming season. It is safe, effective, and recommended for everyone over the age of 6 months.

"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 of the retail price.

If you happen to test positive, says Wilson, "put on a high-quality mask immediately and start the process of isolating." Members over the age of 50 or those who are immuno-compromised should speak to their providers to see if they are eligible for the anti-Covid medication Paxlovid. "Treating Covid is still important, both to reduce the risk of severe disease and the risk of Long Covid. Paxlovid should be started within the first 5 days after symptoms begin" says Wilson.

And of course, though masks are not required right now at Lock Street, we are recommending masking for staff and patients given the increase in Covid cases. People with weakened immune systems should wear a mask, and patients with cough or cold symptoms will be required to mask when they visit, but any visitor who feels more comfortable in a mask will be supported in doing so.

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

### What is MyChart?

MyChart is the patient portal used by Yale Health that allows you to view key aspects of your medical record, review visit notes and results, and message your clinicians

### Call Us

Time-sensitive issues

New or worrisome symptoms  
(Ex: chest pain, shortness of breath, inability to keep food down)

### MyChart Message

Non-urgent issues

Quick updates for your clinician  
(Ex: how you are doing on a medication or something you read in a visit note)  
Sending a photo

### Things to Remember

**Calls take precedence over messages**  
If you've called us about an issue, do not message via MyChart as well

\*Please do NOT use email @Yale.edu to reach providers or staff

**COVID-19 treatment is time sensitive; Call us if you test positive and want to discuss medication**

Messages are reviewed and prioritized by the RN Staff  
May take 2-5 days to respond  
Not reviewed on weekends/nights

**Questions about test results**  
Message the clinician or specialist who ordered the test

Complicated or lengthy questions are best addressed during an appointment

If you are looking for a telephone number or information about a department or service at Yale Health, please consult [yalehealth.yale.edu](http://yalehealth.yale.edu) rather than sending a message

### For Questions About...

- Bills: [yhclaims@yale.edu](mailto:yhclaims@yale.edu) or 203-432-0250
- Referrals: [yhreferrals@yale.edu](mailto:yhreferrals@yale.edu) or 203-432-7397
- Your Yale Health coverage: [member.services@yale.edu](mailto:member.services@yale.edu) or 203-432-0246
- A refill or renewal, please contact your pharmacy
  - Yale Health Pharmacy: 203-432-0033 or [yalehealth.yale.edu/pharmacy](http://yalehealth.yale.edu/pharmacy)
  - The pharmacy will contact your provider directly if a new prescription is needed

**Never hesitate to call 911 for any serious medical problem (chest pain, trouble breathing, seizure, bleeding)**

Yale HEALTH

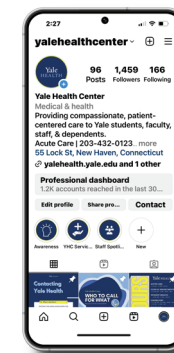
### Stay Connected with Yale Health

@yalehealthcenter

Yale Health Center

@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. **Tell us 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](mailto:member.services@yale.edu)), to answer your questions and hear your concerns about your coverage and care, or even to hear compliments 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.**



Download the app from your smartphone's Apple or Google Play store, and create a login by entering your name and birth date

# Yale Health Welcomes New Providers



**Jacqueline Rohan, OD**  
EYE CARE



**Katherine Mini, MD**  
PEDIATRICS



**Miranda Ip, MD**  
PEDIATRICS



**Roula Rizk, MD**  
INTERNAL MEDICINE



**Naji Wajid, MD**  
OB/GYN



**Catherine Paszek, MD**  
PEDIATRICS



**Christa Wittmann, DO**  
INTERNAL MEDICINE



**David Altamirano, MD**  
INTERNAL MEDICINE

# 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 Patient 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.

