

MEMORANDUM

From: Brown, Karen
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2020 11:23 PM
To: Community Clinicians, et. al.
Subject: A note to our colleagues from the YNHHS COVID-19 Call Center

Dear Physician and APP Colleagues,

Today YNHHS went live with the YNHHS COVID-19 Call Center (203-688-1700).

The Call Center is designed to answer general questions from the community about COVID-19 prevention and risk, what services our hospitals provide, current updates to COVID-19 testing, and to provide a way for at-risk persons in the community to be assessed by video or telephone by one of our trained and prepared clinicians.

In our first 5 hours we received over 200 calls from patients, offices, clinicians, and even hospitals, from areas as far as California, Minnesota, Texas, and Georgia. One video assessment led to an at-risk individual being referred to a local ED and the handoff was helpful to the ED. Many patients received other relevant therapies. It is evident that this service is valuable. We hope that you will direct patients who need this information to call as needed.

We have learned a great deal that we will share over time.

We ask at this point that you help us by continuing to triage patients as you would before COVID-19 was a household topic of conversation. Our call center is best suited to address general questions from the public about COVID-19. We do have limited resources for clinical evaluation of patients and ask that you triage patients so that referral to our call center focuses mostly on persons at risk for COVID-19.

We are working to find the best use of the call center in general, and the Telehealth clinical assessment service in specific. We realize that the assessments are valuable to patients and the medical community, but that the assessment cannot take the place of a trusted personal physician or advanced practice provider. See the note below for some specific suggestions of what is helpful to keep in the office and what is helpful to refer to the call center.

At this point, we ask that the offices can continue, in general, to triage patients with fever without respiratory symptoms and patients with single respiratory symptoms (sore throat, cough) without fever. These patients probably need assessment other than COVID-19 assessment.

At this time, we have realized, that in Connecticut, testing for COVID-19 is essentially only available for hospitalized patients. There is essentially no ability in our state to perform COVID-19 testing in the ambulatory or Emergency Departments at this time. Our Connecticut Department of

Public Health (DPH) still recommends testing for those with fever, cough, and documented exposure to COVID-19 or travel to a country on the COVID risk list with prioritization to those ill enough to require hospital admission. We recognize that national messaging is not in line with our local testing capacity and appreciate the efforts of those who are working to change that.

We look forward to sharing additional insights in the near future

Thank you for your support and understanding.

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