

Yale Patient Navigator Program Update

Opening Statement:

In light of recent events, COVID-19 has had a large impact on our students, their patients, and the community. We, as the Yale Patient Navigator Program (YPNP), have continued to work together as graduate healthcare students to serve alongside our patients (virtually) and the community to expand our outreach and provide additional support to those in need. This update will review the state of YPNP (navigation and research) and our COVID-19 outreach response while providing future directions for the next year to continue the development of the program.

YPNP Program Update:

Current Participation in YPNP

The YPNP program currently offers graduate healthcare students the opportunity to work closely with referred YNHH patients in longitudinal relationships with the objective to provide them with access to healthcare and community resources. The program currently consists of 24 medical students, 10 nursing students, and 2 PA students. We are excited by the prospect of a new wave of medical, nursing, and PA students who will be starting in the coming month, and we have begun planning recruitment.

Navigators	
MD	24
PA	2
Nursing	10
Total	36

Current Patients Navigation in YPNP

With the help of all student volunteers, we are currently acting in this capacity to serve 53 total patients. These are divided between 48 from the refugee community and 5 from the underserved population. Additionally, we are currently providing patient navigation for 33 pediatric patients and 20 adults. Because of the situation of many of these individuals, the challenges are recognized at a family unit level, broadening the number of people being overseen by a patient navigator pairing. Referrals are being received from the following sites: Primary Care Center at York St. and Saint Raphael's Campus, Integrated Refugee and Immigration Services (IRIS). At this time, referrals have not been actively advertised due to limitations in the programs capacity to coordinate navigation referrals to students.

Patients	
Refugee	48
Other	5
Pediatric	33
Adult	20
Total	53

COVID-19 Response

In response to COVID-19, we, in line with public guidelines, ceased meeting in-person within the group and with our patients. Leadership made the decision to transition all communication to virtual means (online or phone) in order to protect student participants and their respective patients. Additional guidance instructed all pairings to reach out to all respective patients to inform them of the pandemic; providing the latest COVID-19 information, answering questions, and responding to situations to help patients during this period.

YPNP Next Steps:

Due to the limitations of the current program and our desire to better serve the patients of YNHH, we are in the process of organizing two capacity building initiatives to welcome more navigators to the program and make use of the diverse student body (Yale Undergraduates & the School of Public Health) at Yale.

Undergraduate Students

This fall, we are hoping to collaborate with Yale University to welcome junior and senior undergraduate students to our program. We envision navigator pairings consisting of a health professional student and 1-2 undergraduate students, with the health professional student being responsible for overseeing all in-person and telephone patient interactions. Undergraduate students would be predominantly responsible for completing tasks that can be done remotely in light of COVID-19, such as scheduling and coordinating rides to clinic visits, sending text reminders regarding clinic visits, assisting patients with medication refills, etc. As social distancing restrictions for COVID-19 lessen, we hope that undergraduates can join health professional students in a clinical setting and be present for patient appointments (with the patient's permission). We will continue to follow school and state guidelines to ensure the safety of all individuals involved.

In addition to working together in a professional capacity, health professional students can offer mentorship to interested pre-health students intending to pursue a career in medicine. Health professional students can speak to graduate student life, gap year experiences, applying to health professional schools, and broadly be present as a resource for pre-health students.

A partnership with Yale University would allow for undergraduates to play an active role in helping patients to overcome social barriers in accessing healthcare as well as gain an introduction to the profession by working alongside health professional students, social workers, and clinicians as a team.

MPH Students

We are additionally interested in the potential collaboration with MPH students from the Yale School of Public Health. In line with their education, we welcome the opportunity to invite their participation and collaboration in working with patients from YNHH. At this time, we are working on reaching out to administration from the School of Public Health to better identify interest and to understand the feasibility of such a collaboration.

With each of these additional components in mind, we acknowledge the priority of effective, supportive service to the patients involved within the program and the imperative of oversight to ensure this success. We will be limiting this initial introduction of undergraduate student participation to 20 in order to use this as a pilot to test this new addition and to identify the challenges that may arise. We are excited for this opportunity to welcome new students into YPNP.

YPNP Research:

As a unique program to Yale, YPNP serves Yale students and YNHH patients alike. Yale graduate healthcare students have the opportunity to participate in longitudinal, experiential learning as they participate in the care coordination for a YNHH patient. Additionally, YNHH patients receive the added support and care from these students with the hopes of alleviating healthcare and community challenges. In order to better understand these benefits, we aim to assess the participation of students and patients in YPNP.

YPNP Student Project:

We are starting a research project to study if longitudinal participation in YPNP improves graduate health professional students (MD, PA, Nursing) knowledge and attitudes toward refugee and community health. A secondary goal of the study is to see if participation in YPNP improves student's ability to work in interprofessional relationships. The study will be structured as a pre- and post- survey to assess navigator's knowledge and attitudes towards refugee and community health. The post-survey will be conducted after 9 months or upon completion of the navigator's participation in the program, serving as a retrospective reflection of their participation in YPNP and their interactions with their respective patient or patients.

Dr. Pooja Agrawal and Dr. Frances Cheng will be mentoring us through the IRB application process, providing direction and guidance for the study. We are in the process of finalizing our IRB draft based on their feedback, and we are planning to submit the IRB in the next couple of weeks in order to begin data collection with our new cohort of navigators this fall.

YPNP Patient Project:

Our second research project aims to answer the question: "Do our adult patients benefit from and become more self-sufficient through participation in YPNP?" This study will be structured as a pre-survey, as part of the patient's initial intake to the program, and a post survey, after the patient has been in the program for 9 months. Evaluation areas of the survey will include access to basic needs such as housing, food, and utilities, self-fulfillment needs such as child care, employment, education, and finance, and health, such as personal safety, healthcare access, and mental health.

We are working on finding funding for interpreters to conduct and transcribe the post survey for patients. Because of the added challenges, we are in the process of developing this study but recognize the added time needed to find solutions. We will continue developing the IRB as we search for this funding and gather feedback on conducting this survey in the most ethical way possible for our vulnerable patient population. We are working on modifying the intake that we already conduct with our patients as a means to gain a better idea of our patients needs and to better direct our future research.

NARHC Poster Presentation:

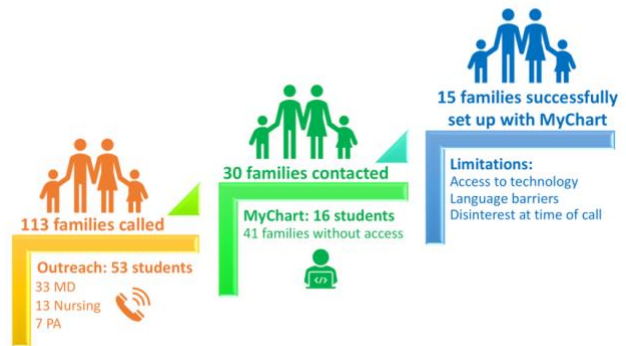
We will be presenting our abstract entitled "Pilot Program: Student-Run Patient Navigator Program Catering to the Health and Well-Being of Refugee and Underserved Families" at the North American Refugee Health Conference (NARHC) on September 17th-19th, 2020.

COVID-19 Response:

In recognizing the significant effect of COVID on the refugee community in Connecticut, YPNP organized proactive efforts through IRIS in order to inform and protect the community and to provide resources to help families through these unprecedented times.

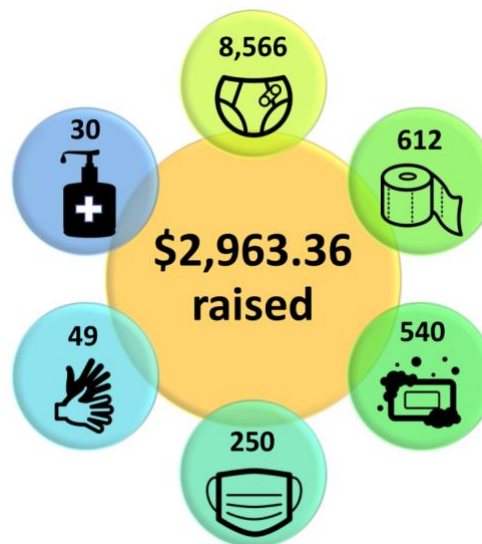
IRIS - Outreach

We were fortunate to have a total of 53 health professional students (33 medical, 13 nursing, 7 PA) volunteer their time to disseminate COVID-19 related information for refugee families in the Greater New Haven Area. We received contact information for 113 refugee families from IRIS and coordinated to call all families regarding transmission and spread of COVID, how to monitor symptoms if you suspect you have COVID, where and how to seek care while respecting social distancing measures, and resources within walking distance supplying food, clothing, and other basic supplies. Through this initial outreach project came an initiative to register patients for MyChart once we realized that many patients did not have access to the application and would subsequently not be able to schedule video visits with their provider. We identified 41 families without access to MyChart, contacted 30 families via phone, and successfully set up MyChart for 15 families. Because MyChart is limited to English and Spanish speaking individuals and requires a smart device for use, language barriers and technology limitations prevented us from setting up MyChart for all of these patients.



Home Supplies Drive:

Covid-19 left many immigrant and refugee families without a steady source of income to afford basic household and hygiene supplies. In response, on May 1st, YPNP launched its Home Supplies Drive. Via a GoFundMe webpage, \$2,963.36 was raised over two months. All donations went to the purchase of supplies in partnership with Costco including 8,500 diapers, 600 rolls of bath tissue, 540 bars of soap, 250 masks, 49 pairs of reusable gloves, and 30 bottles of hand sanitizer. Supplies were then delivered to IRIS for distribution to approximately 250 families.



Summary:

While the past few months have resulted in significant uncertainty and instability within the community, YPNP has continued to address the health and community concerns of our patients. Through COVID modifications, we continue to be in touch with our patients virtually, helping to inform them with the latest information and to respond to the challenges that have arisen. While COVID will continue to impact all of our lives for the foreseeable future, we, as YPNP, continue to embrace the challenge to find new ways to support our community. We are excited to welcome new students as they begin at Yale and new patients as we continue to build the capacity of the program.