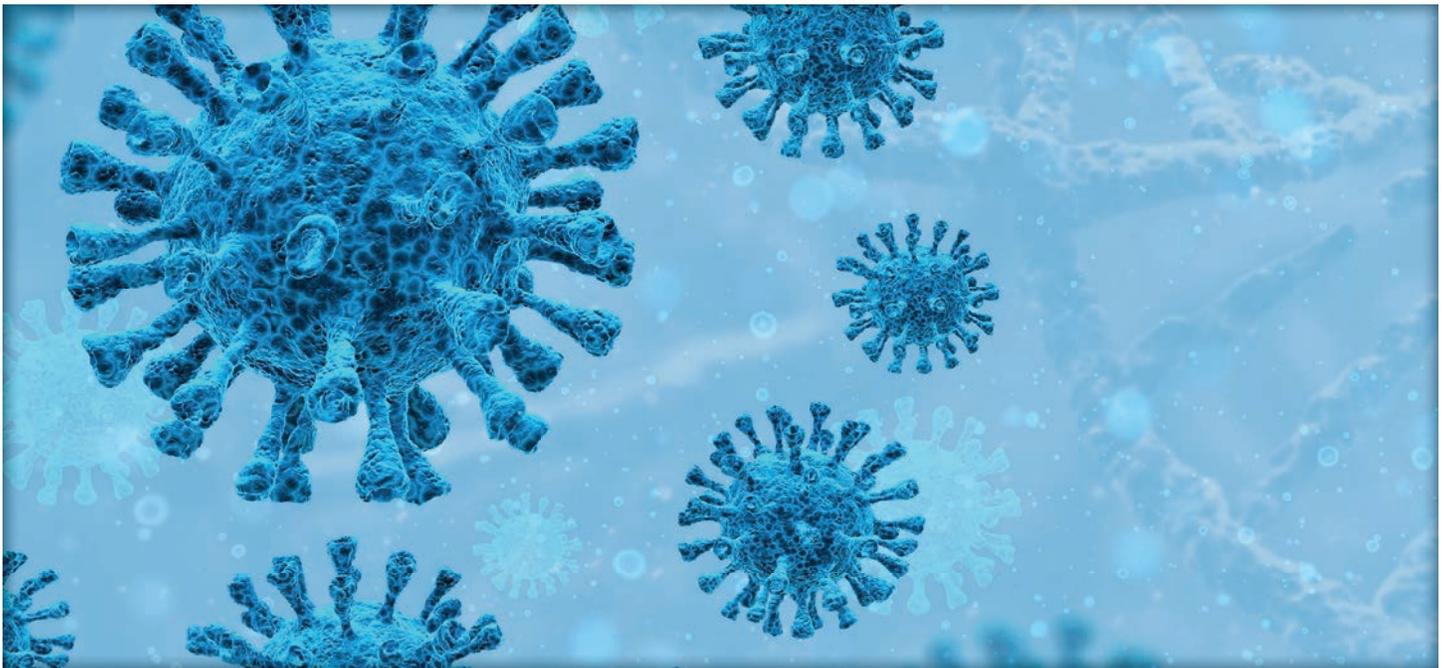


Pivoting in a Pandemic



The impact of COVID-19 has had an astounding effect around the world, and Connecticut is no different. On a local level within Yale Urology, the impact on patient care, supplies, and normal operations has required everyone to be flexible and fluid on a daily basis. In response, our providers and staff have gone above and beyond to provide support and create solutions to help patients and families with the care and services they need during this extraordinary time of crisis, and to support one another.

Patrick A. Kenney, MD, Associate Professor of Urology was Medical Director of Supply Chain at Yale New Haven Health prior to becoming Interim Chair of the Department of Urology. In this role, Dr. Kenney led colleagues to address the profound personal protective equipment (PPE) supply chain disruptions caused by COVID-19. Starting ahead of the curve in January 2020, the team pivoted to industrial PPE, sourced reusable isolation gowns, established a groundbreaking elastomeric respirator program, and developed a novel N95 reprocessing program, which received Emergency Use Authorization by the Food and Drug Administration. The Yale group demonstrated for the first time that vaporized hydrogen peroxide is viricidal, allowing a method for fumigating hospital rooms to be redeployed to reprocess precious N95 respirators. Thanks to these efforts, Yale New Haven Health never ran out of PPE despite one of the heaviest COVID-19 burdens in the country.

To allow urology patients to continue to meet with their physicians for follow-up appointments and consultations, the rapid implementation of

telehealth required significant efforts from our schedulers, management teams, and clinicians. Using the camera on a laptop or mobile device, patients and providers could meet via video, staying in the safety of their own home, while allowing for continuity of care. Diana Glassman, Meghan Curran, Rosy Cruz, and their entire team effortlessly led the transition of many of appointments to telehealth and arranged for multidisciplinary telemedicine visits for our pediatric patients.

As a result of COVID+ inpatient surge and unprecedented staffing needs, we saw many Yale Urology providers stepping forward to volunteer within the MICU, Yale New Haven Hospital's medical intensive care unit, as well as on hospital floors. Several individuals also volunteered for the procedure team, in particular, Adam Hittelman, MD, PhD, who organized and arranged for critical education in central line placing.

With travel and in-person gathering restrictions remaining in place as the fall arrived, the residency interview process also felt the impact of COVID-19. Applicants could no longer visit the campus of their preferred programs. Programs needed to get creative, and as a result, Yale Urology's residents hosted two Zoom open houses, featuring candid conversations with residents, as well as breakout rooms for more formal Q&A opportunities. The interview process also shifted to Zoom, hosting 68 applicants over three days, as well as a virtual meet and greet the night before interviews began—a feat led by Christine Merenda and her administrative team.