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NEWS FROM THE YALE HEALTH PLAN

VOL. III NO. 4

JULY – AUGUST 2000

Up With Downtime



CAROLE T. GOLDBERG, PSYD

Department of Mental Hygiene

The old adage has it that “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.” Pediatrician and world famous psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott wrote extensively on the importance of play. According to Winnicott, there seems to be an evolu-

tionary, adaptive, built-in capacity to play, and the ability to play is an indicator that we are basically okay. A variety of interests and activities makes most of us feel more alive, more interesting and more invested in life.

Winnicott believed that being able to play protected people from a no-play dullness that was a premature death. He also believed that play throughout the life cycle helped relieve the tension of living, helped prepare for the serious and sometimes difficult times, (death, loss, separation), broadened how we define ourselves, and gave us a fuller sense of personal fulfillment and a sense of well being. Play, which many do only on vacation, is a necessary part of living.

Everyone knows theoretically that vacations are important, but American workers have the least paid vacation time in the industrialized world. According to Joe Robinson, editor of *Escape* magazine, “Western Europe and Australia (have) five weeks off (as) the norm, while we eke out nine days at large U.S. companies after one year, 17 after ten years; at small business operations (where the vast majority of

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C A L E N D A R

YHP's Ophthalmology Department is offering free vision screenings (basic eye tests) for enrolled children aged five and older who do not already wear corrective lenses. No appointment needed. Just bring your child to the department (3rd floor of YHP, 17 Hillhouse Avenue) on any of the days listed, from 9:00-11:00 A.M. and 1:00-4:00 P.M. Questions? Call Helen Redmond, RN at 203-432-0084

Wednesday, August 2; Friday, August 4; Wednesday, August 9; Friday, August 11

Quitting Smoking? Know Yourself, Make a Plan

RHEA HIRSHMAN

Editor

ELLEN BUDRIS, MS, RN

Office of Health Promotion & Education

Gone are the days when a dangling cigarette was a de rigueur prop for the suave male movie star or his sophisticated female companion. Still, the lure of cigarettes persists, with over 22% of high school students smoking daily, and 98% of smokers beginning before they turn 21. Paradoxically, those teenage smokers then become adults who want to quit; the American Lung Association says that 31 million of the current 47 million smokers in the U.S. indicate that they want to quit permanently.

With good reason. Cigarette smoking is the single most preventable cause of premature death in the U.S. Even tobacco companies are now admitting the health risks. Smoking-related diseases, notes the Lung Association, claim over 430,000 American lives each year.

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us work...) it's eight days after a year, 16 days after 25 years!"

In addition, Robinson notes that "...Americans now work 142 hours more a year than in 1973, a full three and a half weeks...." and that stress accounts for 19% of the occasions of workers staying home, up from 6% in 1995" — making lack of play (vacation) time an important health issue.

What role do vacations actually play in our lives? We have all sorts of phrases: getting away, down time, taking a break, getting out of the rut, change of scenery — all with the implication that it's essential for us to alter our daily routine.

Sometimes our vacations have symbolic value, as when we have feelings about how much we're "worth" to ourselves or others based on the amount of time we have off; those higher up in the work hierarchy are usually entitled on paper to more vacation time (although whether or not they take it is another matter).

We may also factor in how vacations can affect our relationships. A family vacation might be the only time to get to know those you live with. Vacationing alone can allow you to get to know yourself. Vacations spent with a friend can allow for a chance to talk and interact in totally different ways than you usually do. The lack of strict schedules, responsibilities, bills, and alarm clocks marks a true separation from life's pressures, leading to a sense of freedom. According to some tourism officials, vacation time is likely to be a time when people will do activities together (like walk, swim, eat leisurely meals, or even shop), that they don't do at any other time. If togetherness is lacking in the hectic pace of home and work, then vacations may have even more importance.

Just like people, vacations come in all shapes and sizes. Some vacations have themes (visiting Civil War battlefields), some are aimless (meandering around country roads); some are passive (just hanging out on the beach), some are active (mountain climbing in the Rockies). Whatever the style of vacationing, the need for a break and/or for play is universal. Take your vacation. You deserve it and it's good for you!

Important telephone numbers

Urgent Care	432-0123
<i>Open 24 hrs/day, seven days per week</i>	
Toll Free Information Pharmacy	1-877-YHP-CARE 432-0246 432-0033
<i>Hours of operation</i>	
Monday–Friday	7:30 AM–6:30 PM
Saturday	8:30 AM–3:30 PM
Patient Representative	432-0109
Medicare/Retiree Coordinator	432-8134
Outpatient Referrals/Claims	432-0250
Inpatient Care Facility	432-0001

in touch

Laboratory Medicine Offers Convenient Service, Latest Technology

RHEA HIRSHMAN

Editor

Practically anyone who has access to regular medical care has "gone for tests." YHP members had a total last year of 181,852 diagnostic tests performed through the Laboratory Medicine Department — an average of over 15,100 every month. These ranged from the most routine — such as blood cholesterol levels and urinalysis — to highly specialized tests for tropical diseases encountered while traveling overseas. In



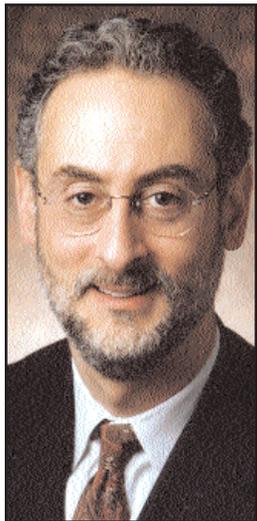
Members of YHP's Department of Laboratory Medicine

fact, members of YHP have access to over 1200 different laboratory tests, which can be performed at the in-house lab at 17 Hillhouse Avenue, run by Quest Diagnostics or at any one of the more than 70 Quest sites around the state.

Brenda Breault, clinical manager of the Laboratory Medicine Department, explains how laboratory testing is scheduled. "For routine tests, where the results are not needed immediately, patients receive lab slips from their clinician and can go to the in-house lab and get the test done that same day. Or they can come in at another more convenient time, or go to any Quest facility." Lab requisition slips for routine tests are usually good for six months although it is best to have the test done as soon as possible. The only tests that do not require a referral are the state-mandated premarital blood tests.

On the other hand, a "stat" test means that the clinician needs to make an immediate treatment decision based on test results. A common example would be a urinalysis to determine treatment for a possible urinary tract infection. "Stat tests have to be done here in-house," Breault says, "and usually patients with stat requisitions will be sent right down to the lab and taken first."

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from the desk of

PAUL GENECIN, MD

DIRECTOR, YALE UNIVERSITY HEALTH SERVICES

Everyone is familiar with immunization programs to protect our infants and children from certain infectious diseases. As we age, we face risks from complications of influenza and community-acquired bacterial pneumonia. In addition, people with asthma, diabetes mellitus, high blood pressure and other chronic conditions are more likely to develop health problems than their peers who do not have these conditions. Many interventions are available to protect people with specific health risks, either by safeguarding them from illness or by detecting problems at an early, treatable stage. At Yale Health Plan, we are developing important new preventive care strategies.

Our female members are familiar with our reminder systems for breast and cervical cancer screening. Using the same blueprint, we are now developing a method to

offer appropriate vaccinations to our older members. This fall when we immunize our members against influenza, we will be making a specific effort to reach our older population. At the same time, we will continue to offer and will increase the promotion of the Pneumovax – the vaccine that offers immunity from pneumococcal infection, a frequent cause of community-acquired bacterial pneumonia in previously healthy older people.

Another example: In the near future, we will launch initiatives for (among others) our asthmatic, diabetic and hypertensive patients, aimed at helping them learn as much as possible about how to stay healthy and to avoid the preventable complications of specific conditions. Our diabetic patients, for instance, will be provided with up-to-date information about managing blood sugar and reducing

the risk of diabetic complications through diet, exercise, and medication. Diabetics should also receive regular checks to test the adequacy of sugar control as well as surveillance to prevent eye problems, foot disease and kidney problems. They may need interventions to manage cardiovascular risk factors such as hypertension, high cholesterol and cigarette smoking. These preventive services are a vital part of diabetes care.

We are setting new and ambitious goals to provide better services, based on specific risks that our members may face because of age or health status. The first program to roll out will be the immunization project for our seniors, and I look forward to announcing many others. As always, I enjoy hearing from you and I welcome your feedback.

LABORATORY MEDICINE

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Stat laboratory services are also available after hours. Samples can be taken either at the Urgent Care Department or the Inpatient Care Facility and sent via courier to the Quest facility in Wallingford. Results are communicated back to the YHP clinician via fax or phone.

YHP has always had laboratory services. But the Department of Laboratory Medicine was created this past December to expand educational services, particularly, according to department chief Ravi Durvasula, MD, “to assist clinicians in staying up to date with this rapidly chang-

ing field.” Activities include a monthly clinician newsletter (“Quick Draw”) which offers information on new testing techniques, statistics, reminders about best practices, and information for clinicians to communicate to patients.

Durvasula notes that laboratory medicine is “a unique field because the technology is changing so rapidly. As new diseases emerge (like Lyme disease), new tests have to be developed. Also, there has been an explosion both in the number and sensitivity of tests and in the range of conditions that can be diagnosed. A lot of this is fueled by molecular biology, being able to look at things in much smaller pieces.” He cites as examples “viral load”

testing for HIV and hepatitis C — tests which, instead of “relying on finding antibodies to the virus, can now actually detect the molecules of the virus within the blood” — with enormous ramifications for treatment.

Durvasula notes that YHP members have access to virtually any laboratory tests that are clinically indicated. “The range of tests we offer is constantly being re-evaluated and expanded. With the advances in both technology and basic science, this is an exciting time for laboratory medicine.”

OUT-OF-AREA COVERAGE

As a YHP member, you are covered for emergency care, urgent care and pre-authorized short-term follow-up care when you are away from the Greater New Haven area.

questions, answers

By answering your questions, this column will help you get the most out of your YHP membership.

*Send your questions to:
Member Services Q & A,
Yale Health Plan,
17 Hillhouse Ave.,
P.O. Box 208237
New Haven, CT
06520-8237.*

*We'll get them answered
by someone "in the know."*

Q. How do I contact YHP while I am away from New Haven?

A. If you need medical advice or wish to report a claim, call the toll-free number: 877-YHP-CARE (877-947-2273) in the United States and Canada. Toll-free numbers for some other countries are available on the web site: www.yale.edu/uhs. For general information, you can contact YHP electronically by emailing us at member.services@yale.edu or by visiting us at our web site.

Q. What is considered an emergency?

A. A major acute medical problem or major acute trauma that requires immediate medical attention, or a condition that could lead to serious harm if treatment is not received or is delayed.

Q. What should I do in an emergency?

A. First and foremost, you should seek care. Your health and well-being are of greatest importance! You do not need to call YHP before receiving emergency treatment. However, you should notify the Claims Department at 203-432-0250 within 48 hours (2 business days) of receiving treatment so that we may coordinate coverage with the provider from whom you received the emergency care.

Q. What if I am away and have a serious problem that might not qualify as an emergency?

A. You are also covered away from campus for urgent situations, defined as the sudden and unexpected onset of

an acute medical problem or trauma requiring immediate medical attention. Care for nonacute phases of chronic conditions, maintenance care, and routine care are not considered urgent. If you are able to, you can call Urgent Care (203-432-0123) or your clinician to obtain medical advice over the phone. If that is not possible you should seek the care you need. If you are away from New Haven County, you may receive urgent care at any medical facility and receive the same coverage as for emergency care, including short-term follow-up care if pre-authorized.

Q. What happens if circumstances prevent me from contacting YUHS within 48 hours?

A. You will still be covered for the emergency or urgent condition, but you should contact Claims as soon as possible to ensure that YHP clinical staff are aware of your condition and to request authorization for follow-up care if needed. Remember to carry your YHP card with you at all times; it can provide valuable information if you can't communicate.

Q. What if my condition requires follow-up care?

A. Short-term follow-up care that is pre-authorized will be covered. YHP clinical staff will assist in coordinating follow-up care, if needed. For help with pre-authorization, call 203-432-0250 or YHP's toll-free number, 877-YHP-CARE.

the YHP staff



L-R: Jones, Henry, San Juan, YHP Director
Paul Genecin, MD, Binkowski and Aquila

Employees Honored

The YUHS Employee Recognition Awards honor individuals who have attained distinction in their work with a commitment to professional excellence and a focus on the needs of our members. In addition, the YUHS Director's Award recognizes someone who may not be in the public eye, but who has given distinguished service in support of our mission to serve our community's health needs. This year's recipients:

PHYSICIAN OF THE YEAR

Robert Henry, MD

A member of the YHP Internal Medicine staff since May, 1997: "... a dedicated physician who is noted for clinical excellence (and) integrity and who shows deep concern for his patients' well-being"

CLINICIAN OF THE YEAR

William Aquila, PAC

A physician associate in Urgent Care and Internal Medicine since February, 1997, who "is always available to answer questions and...to help out."

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Carol Binkowski

A member of the YHP staff since February, 1985 and currently a clinical assistant in the Radiology Department, she "has a compassionate and caring attitude that makes all of our patients feel at ease."

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Regina Jones

A member services representative since April of 1993 and currently the primary staffer of the information desk, she "exhibits a refreshingly positive attitude..." and is "the epitome of 'service with a smile'."

DIRECTOR'S AWARD

AmaBella San Juan

Currently the Housekeeping supervisor, and a member of the YHP staff since April, 1972, she has a "sunny disposition and courteous demeanor which make her a pleasure to work with..."

QUITTING SMOKING

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Smoking is directly responsible for 87% of lung cancer cases and causes most cases of emphysema and chronic bronchitis. More women die each year of lung cancer than of breast cancer (68,000 v. 43,300 in 1999). Smoking, a major factor in coronary heart disease and stroke, has also been linked to conditions including other malignancies, infertility, peptic ulcer disease and osteoporosis. Smokers who are hospitalized for whatever reason need 22% more inpatient time per hospitalization.

Plus, smoking smells bad, discolors teeth, burns holes in the upholstery, and increases the risk of accidental fires.

Changing any habit is hard, and nicotine is an addictive drug which, when inhaled, reaches the brain faster than drugs that enter the body intravenously. Smokers become not only physically

addicted; they also link smoking with many social activities, making smoking a difficult habit to break.

The process of smoking cessation involves five stages of psychological preparation:

- 1. Precontemplation.** The smoker is not intending to quit in the foreseeable future. The pros of smoking still outweigh the cons.
- 2. Contemplation.** The pros equal the cons. The smoker is seriously thinking about quitting in the next six months.
- 3. Preparation.** The cons outweigh the pros and the smoker is intending to try quitting in the next month.
- 4. Action.** The smoker is overtly modifying behaviors. This stage lasts approximately six months.
- 5. Maintenance.** The smoker uses multiple processes to modify environment and experiences in order to prevent smoking relapse.

Successful quitters average three or four cycles through these stages before eventually becoming smoke free. Relapses are often part of the process. Smoking is an addiction and quitting requires careful planning and hard, persistent work. A successful cessation program consists of three components:

- **Preparation** increases the smoker's motivation and builds confidence. Helping the person progress to just one of the above stages can double the chance they will quit within six months.
- **Intervention** aims to achieve smoking abstinence through any of the methods and programs that assist in coping with nicotine withdrawal and replacement. It also involves reducing environmental triggers and providing physical and psychological substitutes.
- **Maintaining abstinence** through individualized programs of support, coping strategies and substituting behaviors.

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books/information

BOOK REVIEWS

In the spirit of summer, members of the YHP staff have shared some ideas for good vacation reading.

Katie Cotter, senior representative in Member Services recommends three works of fiction: *The Notebook*, by Nicholas Sparks is “A great (short) love story that spans a couple’s lifetime.” *Saving Faith* by David Baldacci and *When the Wind Blows* by James Patterson are suspenseful, the first “with...FBI/CIA type characters” and the second “about genetic manipulation and murder.”



Jo Ann Della Valle, administrative professional in Undergraduate Medicine, recommends *The Brethren* by John Grisham and

Where the Heart Is by Billie Letts. She says “I am currently reading it for the second time and am enjoying it as much as the first time.”

Vicki Eisler, patient representative in Member Services recommends *Disgrace* by J.M. Coetzee, “A story of life in post-apartheid South Africa.”

Michele Fahey, MD, a psychiatrist in the Department of Mental Hygiene, got a kick out of reading *The Emperors of Chocolate: Inside the Secret World of Hershey and Mars* by Joel Glenn Brenner. She says “...a fascinating book about the history of chocolate and the larger-than-life characters of Milton Hershey and the Mars family.”

Suguru Imaeda, MD, chief of Dermatology, recommends *Total Skin: The Definitive Guide to Whole Skin Care for Life* by David Lefell, MD, professor of dermatology and surgery, and associate dean at the Yale School of Medicine. “Intended for the lay public, the book provides accurate and useful information on all aspects of skin health....”

Diane Miller, technical manager in ITS, praises Jane Hamilton’s *Map of the World*, which she describes as “very intense reading about how an ordinary life can be turned upside-down with a blink of an eye. Lovely writing; an absolute intriguing novel.”

Carol Ann Nash, senior administrative assistant in Internal Medicine is hooked on a mystery series by Janet Evanovich. The titles include: *One for the Money*; *Two for the Dough*; *Three to Get Deadly* and so on. Nash says, “....read them in order to appreciate

them more and to follow the characters....When you finish the first book you want more. After the second you still want more.”

James Perlotto, MD in Internal Medicine, recommends three books. *Cold Mountain* by Charles Frazier is a “beautifully written story of a confederate soldier who walks many miles through many hazards to get home; interwoven is the story of the courageous woman who survives equal hardships and waits for him.” *The Hours* by Michael Cunningham, is an “award-winning book that weaves together intimate views of a day in the life of three unusual women (one is Virginia Woolf on her last day of life) and one man with AIDS. Elegantly written; sad but uplifting...” Plus: *The Perfect Storm* by Sebastian Junger: “Gripping (true) tale of fishermen and a terrible storm that catches them on the Grand Banks. It gives one respect for the hard work and dangers these men face. It is coming out in a movie this summer.”

George D. Wilkinson III of desktop services is “going to revisit two books, by Wilkie Collins: *The Moonstone* and *Woman in White*.” He notes: “Collins more or less invented the mystery novel; these are still among the best.”



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INFORMATION

NEW MAMMOGRAPHY SITE

Yale-New Haven Hospital has opened a satellite radiology office at 150 Sargent Drive in New Haven. There is easy access from I-95, and free parking in addition to convenient daytime, evening and Saturday hours. In addition to mammography, they provide general X-ray, CT scan services, and complete ultrasound service. The technologists and the equipment are the same as at YNHH. Call 203-781-4212 for an appointment.

QUITTING SMOKING

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These may include individual and group support, telephone counseling, and internet resources as well as nicotine replacement therapy (in multiple combinations). Coping behaviors used to maintain abstinence are different from those used to quit initially. Remember, smokers make an average of three or four serious attempts to quit before they are able to achieve long term abstinence. The probability of relapsing is highest within the first 90 days after quitting and then levels off.

The work of quitting can be hard, but the rewards are significant. After just eight hours without cigarettes, a smoker will achieve a normal blood oxygen level and, after 24 hours, the risk of heart attack begins to decrease. After 48 hours the senses of smell and taste are enhanced. Those who remain smoke-free for three months will experience improved circulation and an increase in lung function. The list goes on. And those who quit for the long — 15 years or more — will have about the same mortality rates as those who have never smoked.

For more information about smoking cessation contact your clinician or Office of Health Promotion and Education (203-432-0093)

healthy ideas

PLAYING WELL WITH OTHERS

A fit body looks and feels better, and fit people stay healthier longer. Encouraging children to participate in any physical activity they enjoy — whether it is organized, sports, dance, or recreational activities such as hiking, bicycling or swimming — can help promote a lifelong habit of exercise. These guidelines on sports participation are adapted from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

At what age should a child start sports?

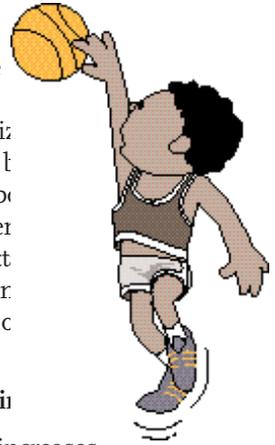
Children do not understand the concept of teamwork until they are about six, so free play is advised until then. Make sure your child gets a complete physical exam before starting a sports program. Consider age, weight, size and physical and emotional development when deciding whether a child should compete at a certain level. Late-developing teens should delay contact sports until their bodies have caught up with those of their

more mature peers. Children should not be pushed into a sport that they are not physically or emotionally ready for.



Should boys and girls play in sports together?

Until puberty, boys and girls can compete together because they are almost the same size and weight. After puberty, boys gain an advantage in body strength and size. Their safety and fairness dictate boys and girls should not compete against each other in most sports.



What are the risks of injury?

The chance of injury increases with the degree of contact. Some sports pose a greater risk than others, with football leading the list. No young person should participate in boxing, which involves a high risk of brain damage. Protective equipment can prevent many sports injuries. You should emphasize to your young athlete that protective gear will increase long-term enjoyment of the sport.

How can stress be minimized?

Measure your child's performance by effort rather than by winning; a young athlete should set goals and then strive to reach them. She will respond better to rewards for trying hard, or for gaining skills, than to punishment and criticism for losing. Learning to cope with stress is an important part of growing up. Sports can be one arena in which children learn the skills for coping with stress caused by any problem.

Should bad grades keep a child from sports?

There is no simple answer. A child having trouble in the classroom still needs the benefits of exercise, competition and a sense of accomplishment. Sports may be an avenue of success in a child's life, and it could be harmful to take it away. Parents should look for other causes of poor classroom performance, such as conflicts with a job or other duties, or too much TV watching. Ask your child what you can do to help him improve at school.

UNSTICK THAT TICK

Lyme disease is caused by a bacteria transmitted through the bite of an infected deer tick. Because transmission is unlikely to occur within the first 36 hours of tick attachment, it is vital to check for these tiny insects (about the size of a sesame seed) before they embed themselves into your skin. Finding and removing ticks before they can transmit disease should be routine for anyone who spends time out of doors — whether in the woods or in a yard — in warm weather.

To remove a tick, grasp it firmly with fine tipped tweezers as close to your skin as possible, and with a steady motion pull the tick's body away from your skin. Do not use petroleum jelly or any other products on the tick because that will make the tick difficult to hold onto. Cleanse the area with antiseptic afterwards. Watch for a red "bull's eye" rash which may appear 7 to 14 days after the bite. Also, be alert for fever, headaches or flu-like symptoms. If any of these or the rash occurs, consult your clinician.

calendar

ONGOING WELLNESS PROGRAMS

Early Pregnancy Classes

Held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month from 10:30–11:30 in room 405 for YHP members. To register, call the Ob/Gyn Department at 203-432-0222 or stop by the appointment desk. We encourage you to bring a supportive person.

Weight Watchers at Work

Mondays, 12:15–1:00 in room 405. You can join any time. For information, call 203-432-1892.

Adult CPR Classes

Adult CPR classes are held monthly. For information, call 203-432-1892.

Blood Pressure Checks

Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00–11:00 in room 406. Open to the Yale community free of charge, by referral or on a walk-in basis. For info, call 203-432-0093.

Post-partum Reunions

Held on the 3rd Friday of each month from 10:00–11:30 in room 405. Bring your new babies to this great support network for all new moms! Conducted by Wendy Madore, RNC. Call the Ob/Gyn Dept. (203-432-0222) to register.

YHP Cancer Support Group

Life Options is a support group for adult YHP members who have been diagnosed with cancer, regardless of type of cancer or stage of disease. The group meets weekly with a facilitator. There are three 15-week programs each year. Group members can enroll in consecutive series of meetings. Funded partially by the Edith S. Hallo Fund and by a small weekly fee charged to each participant. To enroll or for more information, contact the facilitator, Mona Felts, MSW, at 203-432-0290.

Save the Date

The third Yale Conference on Women's Health & Fitness, of which Yale Health Plan is a sponsor, will be held October 26–28 at the Omni Hotel at Yale in New Haven. Information about registration: (877) 717-7776. Information about the conference and speakers: (203) 688-WELL. The YHP Office of Health Promotion and Education, (203) 432-0093, also has conference material. The conference web site is www.info.med.yale.edu/ynhh/well.

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