

Clinician Update

Feb. 3, 2022

Today Is National Women Physicians Day

National Women Physicians Day recognizes the strides made by generations of female doctors. It marks the birthday of Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman to receive a medical degree in the United States in 1849. She was famously allowed to attend medical school in what was considered a lark, but she proved everyone wrong. Dr. Blackwell became the first woman in America to earn her medical degree, and initiated the movement that helped women gain entry and equality in the field of medicine.

“We celebrate and honor Dr. Blackwell and the many talented professionals who came before us,” said Senior VP and Chief Medical Officer Dr. Jennifer Khelil. “And we celebrate those among us today. Look no further than our colleagues right here at Virtua Health. We are inspired by their dedication and care for our patients as well as their roles in paving the way for future female leaders here at Virtua and in the medical field.”

Dennis Pullin Pens Opinion Piece about Civility in Health Care

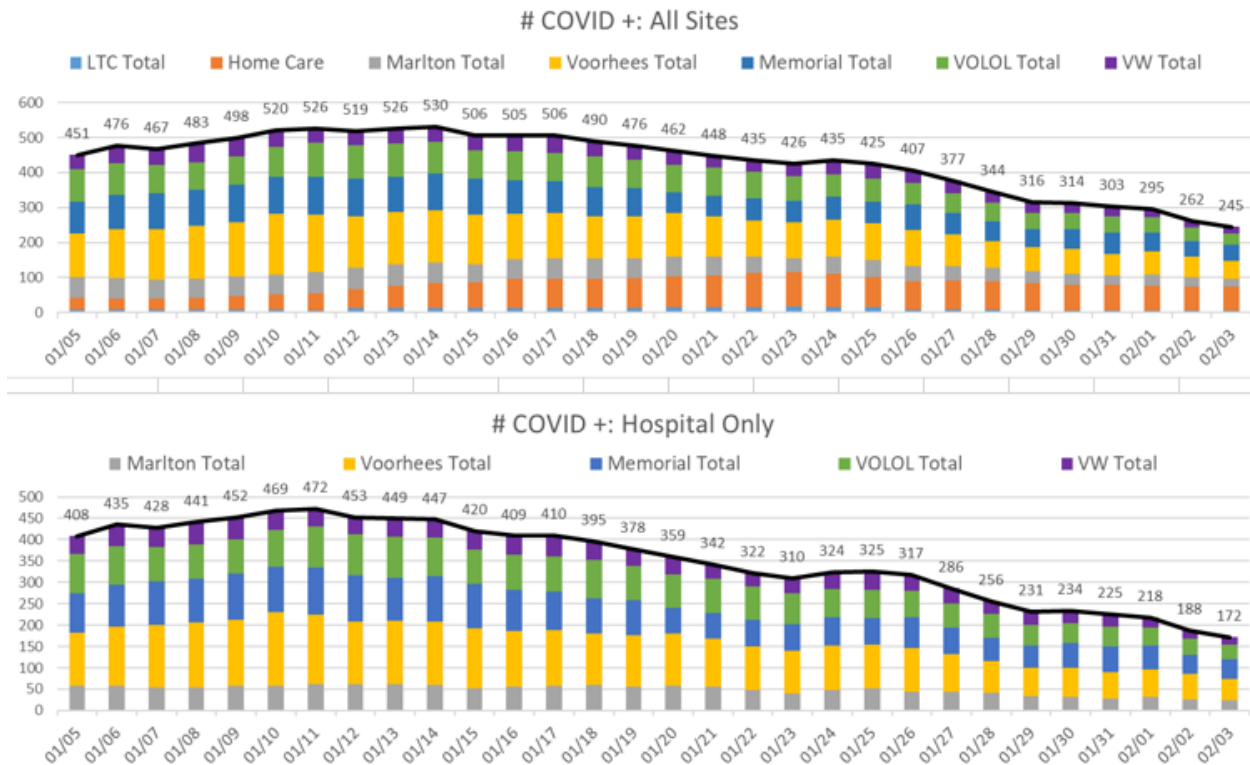
This week, the New Jersey business publication *ROI-NJ* ran an opinion piece written by Virtua Health President and CEO Dennis W. Pullin that explores the growing disrespect, hostility, and even violence that health care workers experience far too often.

“This precipitous shift from lauding our health care heroes no more than a year ago to a demonstrated lack of respect today is one that should give us all pause—because it may reflect who we’re becoming as a society,” Pullin wrote. “Our health care workers are here for a calling, not to be called names. They are here to help and to heal, not to be hurt.”

Pullin also conveys the need for a *reset button*, writing that “kindness and respect are as much a part of the solution to this public health crisis as vaccines and masks.”

Click [here](#) to read the entire article in support of health care personnel at Virtua and beyond. Feel free to share on your personal social media channels to spread the message.

COVID-19 Census



Latest COVID-19 Fast Facts

- The rate of transmission in New Jersey was last reported yesterday as 0.55.
- The total number of cases reported today:
 - Burlington County: 80,346 cases
 - Camden County: 101,112 cases
 - Gloucester County: 52,976 cases
- COVID-associated mortality for Camden, Burlington, and Gloucester counties: 3,371.
- The state’s Vaccination Overview dashboard last reported 16,400,385 doses of vaccine have been administered.

COVID-19 Cases Continue to Decline

According to [NJ.com](https://www.nj.com), daily reported cases of COVID-19 continue to fall as the omicron wave that gripped New Jersey since mid-December continues to recede. The state’s seven-day average for new confirmed positive tests fell to 4,042, down 43% from a week ago and 83% from a month ago.

The statewide positivity rate has also been dropping from earlier this month. The rate for tests conducted on Saturday, the most recent day available, was 12.07%. The rate had been above 30% through the early weeks of January.

But deaths, which tend to follow weeks or a month after a spike in cases, continue to mount. The state reported 2,380 confirmed deaths in the month of January, three more than 2,377 in January 2021 and the most in a month since May 2020, when 4,566 deaths were reported. The state’s deadliest month was April 2020, with 7,011 fatalities.

Virtua Closes COVID-19 Command Center

With COVID-19 cases steadily declining and COVID hospitalizations at their lowest point since late December 2021, Virtua has closed the COVID-19 Command Center. We asked Paul Sarnese, AVP of safety and security, and Laura Hayes, VP of clinical quality and performance improvement, to discuss the function of the Command Center and what comes next.

What led to the decision to close the COVID-19 Command Center?

Sarnese: *The role of a command center is to centralize the organization's response to a crisis; it helps to ensure everyone is on the same page. At present, our COVID census throughout Virtua is back to what it was before the omicron surge. There are still a lot of people in need of care and a lot of work to be done, but to the credit of our colleagues, the situation is under control.*

What were some of the key functions of the Command Center?

Hayes: *The impact on staffing was significantly different during this wave of the pandemic. Because COVID was so prevalent in the region, we had higher rates of colleagues out on quarantine at once than ever before. Ensuring that all divisions of Virtua had who and what they needed to care for the community was a huge, cross-department undertaking. We also worked to ensure we stayed on top of evolving federal and state guidelines in terms safety protocols.*

What changes now that the Command Center is closed?

Sarnese: *There will not be a noticeable change for most colleagues. Our teams—including safety, security, operations, logistics, and more—will remain dedicated toward our COVID response. The major difference is that there will no longer be a physical hub for people to report to; the relationships and responsibilities continue on. We sincerely hope we will not have to reopen the Command Center again, but remain at-the-ready.*

In the News: FDA Fully Approves Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has fully approved Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine. The mRNA vaccine has been widely available for about a year under emergency use authorization in response to the ongoing public health crisis; about 200 million doses have been administered in the United States.

Acting FDA Commissioner Dr. Janet Woodcock [said](#) that "for some individuals, FDA approval of this vaccine may instill additional confidence in making the decision to get vaccinated."

The two-dose vaccine is available for adults, 18 and older. The vaccine is also administered in a lower dosage as a booster (which presently remains under emergency use authorization). The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine received FDA approval in August 2021.

Booster Up! Virtua's "Live your Life Boosted" Campaign Hits Social Media

Recent data published by the CDC showed that Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 boosters were not just reducing the number of omicron infections, but they were also keeping infected Americans—who had all three doses—out of hospitals.

The CDC's study showed that the extra doses are **90 percent effective** at preventing hospitalization with the variant. Booster shots also reduce the likelihood of a visit to an emergency department or urgent

care clinic. The data also showed that extra doses are most beneficial against infection and death among Americans ages 50 and older.

Despite these compelling numbers, interest in getting the booster has waned in recent weeks. The average number of boosters administered per day in the United States has dropped from a peak of 1 million in early December to about 490,000 as of last week.

Furthermore, only 40% of Americans have gotten the extra shot, considerably lower than the less-than-impressive 63% who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

Virtua is doing its part in encouraging the public to get the booster. Early this week, the “Live Your Life Boosted” campaign launched on Virtua’s social media pages.

The quick videos showcase friends having dinner and playing cards with the words, “For the highest level of protection from COVID—live your life boosted.”

If you or a loved one hasn’t already, booster up! To make an appointment, visit <https://bit.ly/VaxMegaSite>.

Celebrate Ambulatory Care Nursing Week – Feb. 7-13

A new and deserved appreciation week debuts on the recognition calendar this year. Ambulatory Care Nursing Week is from Feb. 7 to 13, a great opportunity to acknowledge the extremely talented individuals making such a positive difference for the community.

Ambulatory care nursing is a unique domain of specialty nursing practice that focuses on health care for individuals, families, groups, communities, and populations. They practice in primary and specialty care outpatient venues, non-acute surgical and diagnostic outpatient settings in the community, and during telehealth encounters. These nurses collaborate and partner with the health consumer and other health professionals to ensure the health consumer accesses and receives appropriate care across the health care continuum. In partnership and collaboration with other health care professionals, ambulatory care RNs address patients’ wellness, acute illnesses, chronic diseases, disabilities, and end-of-life needs.

At Virtua, ambulatory care nurses serve in a variety of roles, particularly in population health within Virtua Integrated Network (VIN) and Virtua Medical Group (VMG) supporting our most complex, high-risk patients. We commend these talented colleagues for their professionalism, and tireless dedication!

Celebrating Virtua’s Lasting Impact Project Honorees

Gratitude is not a small gesture... it is a meaningful, selfless expression from the heart. Gifts of gratitude are a wonderful way for Virtua Health patients, families, and colleagues to have a lasting impact as they express their thanks for outstanding care, a job well done, and the many little things that make such a difference. Last year, more than 100 grateful patients and community members made philanthropic gifts to recognize a Virtua colleague for their service.

We thank our 2021 Lasting Impact Project honorees for exemplifying Virtua’s Culture of WE and for their commitment to making a difference every day. Please join us in extending congratulations to this distinguished roster of honorees! Click to [view a larger image](#). Visit virtua.org/gratitude to learn more about how we invite our community to make a lasting impact through philanthropy.

Happy New Year(s) from VirtuAsia

The VirtuAsia Colleague Community would like to wish you a Happy Lunar New Year and Chinese New Year and share additional information regarding the holiday.

Lunar New Year, Chinese New Year, or Spring Festival—you may hear all three of these terms and wonder which is the correct one to use. When referring specifically to a new year event where Chinese traditions and culture are celebrated, you can refer to it as Chinese New Year. Lunar New Year is more inclusive and encompasses all celebrations that mark the new year according to the lunisolar calendar. Lunar New Year started this week and lasts until Feb. 15.

VirtuAsia encourages you to visit WE Applaud and send an eCard to a colleague to wish them a happy Lunar New Year or Chinese New Year, to invite prosperity, and welcome good luck.

Virtua Has Heart

Tomorrow, Feb. 4 is National Wear Red Day! We invite all Virtua colleagues to recognize Heart Month in February by wearing your favorite shade of red. We invite you to submit a selfie or team photo to hellogood@virtua.org and it may be featured in *By Design* and Virtua's social media pages. Please be sure to include your department's name in the email.

Did We Hit the Mark? Clinician Update Contact Refresh

Our team recently completed a refresh of the *Clinician Update* contact list. We observed that some of our clinicians have multiple email accounts. Did we reach you at your preferred email box? If not, just shoot us a message at VirtuaClinician@virtua.org and we'll take it from there.