



Clinician Update

July 17, 2025



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Virtua Health and ChristianaCare Sign Non-Binding Letter of Intent to Explore the Co-Founding of New Regional Not-for-Profit Health System

As shared on Wednesday with all colleagues and the public, Virtua Health and ChristianaCare have signed a non-binding letter of intent to explore the co-founding of a new regional not-for-profit health system. The combined system would provide care across more than 10 contiguous counties in New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Maryland.

"This is an exciting first step in a collaborative journey to amplify the strengths of two trusted health systems," said Virtua President and CEO Dennis W. Pullin. "We see this as a unique opportunity to shape the future of care in this region with innovation and intention. Together, we aim to create an integrated regional health system built on human connection, clinical excellence, and a deep commitment to all people in the communities we serve."

Both Virtua Health and ChristianaCare will continue to operate as separate, independent entities while we explore this potential arrangement. Hear more from Dennis in this [video](#) distributed to all colleagues yesterday, and read the full [media release on Virtua.org](#).

Excellence Multiplied: Virtua Health and ChristianaCare's Announcement

In less than 24 hours after announcing the shared intention to explore co-founding a new not-for-profit regional health system, Virtua Health and ChristianaCare were the focus of more than 60 distinct new stories online, on television, and on the radio. National industry publications reported on the story, including [Becker's Hospital Review](#), [Fierce Healthcare](#), and [Chief Healthcare Executive](#). Closer to home, stories appeared on [6abc Action News](#), [CBS-3 Philadelphia](#), [WHYY](#), [ROI-NJ](#), [Courier-Post](#), [BINJE](#), [New Jersey Business](#), and several others.

Virtua Opens Neuroscience Intensive Care Unit at Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital

Next week, Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital will open its Neuroscience Intensive Care Unit. The specialized neuro ICU is equipped with the latest medical advancements and technology to care for critically ill patients with a wide range of neurological and neurosurgical conditions.

The unit ensures patients receive around-the-clock attention and personalized interventions from specially trained clinicians, nurses, and support staff. Research has consistently shown that outcomes for this patient population are significantly improved when admitted to a specialized neuro ICU compared to a general intensive care unit.

The unit's patients include those with ischemic and hemorrhagic strokes, subarachnoid hemorrhages, cerebral aneurysms, brain tumors, central nervous system infections, neuromuscular disorders, and seizures.

"By establishing a dedicated space and fostering teamwork across neurology, neurosurgery, critical care, emergency medicine, radiology, pharmacy, nursing, rehabilitation, and all hospital services, we are building a coordinated system of care that will elevate the patient experience and clinical outcomes," said M. Shea Ehntholt, MD, lead physician for the neuro ICU. "We are passionate about this work and eager to elevate and refine our collective capabilities."

Virtua Launches Doula Services, Advancing Maternal Health Outcomes

Leading the way for maternal health in South Jersey, Virtua has developed a model to seamlessly integrate birth doulas into maternity care. A cohort of certified community and Virtua-employed doulas has been carefully selected based on predetermined criteria. All are certified by a recognized body, are CPR

and first aid certified—including infant and child CPR—have attended a minimum number of births, have professional liability insurance, and have provided references from previous clients or health care providers. These doulas have been issued Virtua badges facilitating access to their patients in the maternity unit at Virtua’s birthing hospitals.

“Doula care is shown to improve maternal health outcomes, decreasing cesarean rates, preterm births, and other birth complications,” said Nicole Lamborne, MD, vice president of clinical operations for women’s services. “Virtua is committed to fostering a collaborative environment for our clinical teams and doulas to ensure compassionate and patient-centered care for all.”

Patients may now contact Virtua Doula Services to help pair them with a doula who is best suited for them based on their birthing preferences and needs. For more information, call 856-247-7464 or visit virtua.org/doulas.

In Case You Missed It... Introducing *Case of the Month*

Last month, Virtua launched a new digital series bringing clinically relevant information to the physician community. *Case of the Month* features a recent case study highlighting the advanced, tertiary-level care services offered at Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital. The first issue showcased Virtua’s team approach to advanced heart failure involving a left ventricular assist device (LVAD) implant and included a post-implant progress report. Learn about the case history, intervention, and follow-up care. [Click here to read the issue](#).

“The inaugural issue was delivered via email to internal and external clinicians in June,” explained Virtua SVP for Tertiary Services & Planning Christine Palms, MS, RN. “We received great feedback, so much so that why not share it more broadly among our colleagues and community? While intended for a clinical audience, *Case of the Month* demonstrates the highly advanced, multidisciplinary care offered right here at Virtua. What better way to demonstrate our power of WE.”

Virtua Health Updates Privacy Policy Following Federal Changes — New Jersey Protections Remain in Place

Recent changes at the federal level have affected certain privacy protections for reproductive health care information. In response, Virtua Health has updated its **Reproductive Health Care Privacy Policy** to reflect these federal changes and to reaffirm our commitment to protecting our patients’ privacy.

Importantly, these federal changes **do not impact New Jersey's 2022 law**, which remains fully in effect. That law continues to require patients' **written consent** before reproductive health information can be disclosed in legal, administrative, or legislative proceedings. Virtua Health remains fully compliant with this state law.

If you are a colleague who handles medical record releases and has traditionally asked for reproductive health attestations as part of your standard duties, please speak with your leader to ensure you fully understand how the revised policy impacts you and your team.

You can view the updated policy [here](#).

For questions or additional information, please contact Virtua's Privacy Office at privacyofficer@virtua.org.

We Communicate Thoughtfully

This week, our teams across Virtua are watching tips about prioritizing and demonstrating kindness. It's the second chapter of our Guiding Principles series, *WE Communicate Thoughtfully*. [Click to view the tip by track](#).

What Patients Are Saying About Our Clinicians

Positive feedback continues to come in from our patients. Note the following recent examples and how the patient felt about the experience, and the clinician referenced:

"Everything went smoothly. The check-in online was easy, only sat in the waiting room for a few minutes. Everyone was welcoming, and the doctor and PA were good listeners. It was my first visit there as I had to establish a new rheumatologist after 16 years, so I'm very satisfied with how everything went."
(**Humaira Khan, MD** – Rheumatology)

"Dr. Ashby Mammen is a wonderful physician. He's professional, understanding, non-judgmental, respectful, knowledgeable, and thorough. He spent an adequate amount of time with me and did not rush. I felt valued, as a person and as a patient. He has excellent communication skills and made me feel confident and comfortable with the new medication plan. I feel hopeful and happy, thanks to him!" (**Ashby Mammen, MD** – Psychiatry)

"An excellent provider who spent considerable time with me. I recommend her highly." (**Krista N. Brewin, PA** – Cardiology)

"I've been a patient of Dr. Deger for two years following a serious cancer diagnosis. Dr. Deger is very thorough and always familiar with your case details. He listens and addresses all concerns. I feel I received excellent treatment at Virtua, and I'm so very grateful that Dr. Deger was my surgeon." (**Randolph Deger, MD** – Gynecologic Oncology)

"I have been a patient for over 25 years. Intelligence, caring, and respect 100%, all the time." (**Robert Davis, DO** – Family Medicine)

"Wonderful experience for our child. Both the doctor and her 3rd year medical student were well-versed in the topic we discussed. We received acute care as well as a second opinion for something from a specialist. We received the help we needed. It was our first time with Dr. Bruner, but we have been with the practice since 2012. Our child was comfortable and felt good about the appointment. We would see this physician again." (**Laurie Bruner, MD** – Pediatrics)

***South Jersey Magazine* Shares Top Physicians for Women**

Congratulations to the many Virtua physicians included in the 2025 *South Jersey Magazine Top Physicians for Women* list.

The magazine states, "We're proud to showcase 2025's roundup of the local doctors who are taking women's health concerns seriously, treating their patients holistically, and improving lives one person at a time."

[Click here to view the list.](#)

***HeartTalk* Wins International Honor**

The winter 2025 issue of *HeartTalk*, a quarterly consumer magazine that is one of Virtua's primary ways of promoting its services and clinicians, recently received gold honors in the 2025 Hermes Creative Awards.

The Hermes Creative Awards is an international competition that honors excellence in concept, writing, and design across traditional and emerging media. The awards recognize outstanding work in the industry and celebrate the philanthropic spirit of marketing and communication professionals.

Entries are judged by industry experts who look for work that not only meets a high standard of excellence but also sets a benchmark for others.

The winter issue features Daniel Tran, DO; Rick Heuser, LCSW; Samuel Wasser, MD; Erin Wickersham, RDN; Joanne Luczak-Marzo, APN-C; Amy Lombardo, APN-C; Aatish Garg, MD; Hafeza Shaikh, DO, FACC; James Crawford, MD; Catherine Kim, MD; Syed Riaz, MD; Justine Spisak-Mosher, DO; and Venkata Meka, DO.

Click [here](#) to read the digital version of the magazine. To view other issues, visit [here](#).

More of Virtua in the News

Rise in COVID-19 Cases Caused by New Variant

Dr. Angela Skrzynski, lead physician for Virtua Urgent Care Telehealth, discussed a dominant new COVID strain known as “Nimbus” or NB.1.8.1. Many patients experience a painful symptom dubbed “razor blade throat.” Dr. Skrzynski shared information about updated vaccines due this fall. Watch on [CBS 3](#).

Virtua Maternal-Fetal Medicine Specialist Warns About Parvovirus Risk During Pregnancy

The CDC has issued an alert about increased rates of parvovirus, a respiratory infection that is especially dangerous for unborn babies. Virtua maternal-fetal medicine specialist, Jenani Jayakumaran, MD, noted there is a risk that the virus can pass across the placenta and infect the baby. Dr. Jayakumaran shared the recommendation that patients consider masking, as well as standard hygiene awareness like hand washing. Watch on [CBS 3](#).

Home Visit Program Supports Mothers and Newborns

Virtua is among several health systems participating in Family Connects NJ, a state-funded program providing home visits to new mothers. The program offers vital support in an effort to improve families’ health and reduce maternal and infant mortality. Virtua is a “champion of the program,” taking multiple steps to ensure patients can access it, according to Jennie Sherlock-Loeb, a clinical leader involved with Family Connects NJ. Read in [NJ Spotlight News](#).

Health Care CEO’s Role Is Evolving

Chief executives have become important sources of information about their organizations, according to industry experts. Virtua President and CEO Dennis

W. Pullin, FACHE, shared his perspective on communicating about both societal and organizational issues.

“People are attracted to organizations where there is a certain consciousness on the part of the leaders, and people want to work for organizations that stand for something,” he said. Read in [Becker’s Hospital Review](#).

Dr. Sanghvi Shares Career Highlights in Podcast Interview

Kintur Sanghvi, MD, chief of interventional cardiology, director of cardiovascular innovation, and medical director of Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes cardiac catheterization laboratory, has already compiled a career of milestones. He has completed 13,000 cardiovascular procedures, authored multiple research articles, and is renowned for his work in renal denervation. He recently appeared on the *Inspired Stories* podcast. The episode is titled “Revolutionized Heart Care: From Life-Saving Innovations to FDA-Approved Breakthroughs.” This podcast takes us through his journey from witnessing his first life-saving procedure as a young doctor in India to pioneering cardiovascular care. Dr. Sanghvi reveals how compassionate innovation and international collaboration continue to save countless lives while addressing the silent killer that affects 1.8 billion people worldwide.

Watch on [YouTube](#).

Join Virtua at the Walk to End Alzheimer’s

When: Sept. 13, Registration at 8:30 a.m., ceremony at 10 a.m., walk at 10:30 a.m.

Where: Cooper River Park, Pennsauken

This isn't just a walk; it's a powerful movement. Our team of dedicated doctors, nurses, staff, leaders, and community members from across South Jersey are all driven by a single mission—to raise awareness, support families, and help end Alzheimer's for good.

Registration is free, and no donation is required (though always appreciated).

Bonus for Pre-Registered Walkers:

The first pre-registered colleagues to check in at Virtua’s table on the morning of the walk will receive a Virtua “We Thrive” hat on a first-come, first-served basis,

while supplies last.

Ready to make a difference? Register today by clicking [here](#).



Virtua Health

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