

## Clinician Update

August 21, 2025



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## Newsweek Recognizes Outstanding Doctors

Congratulations to the Virtua clinicians who appear in *Newsweek's* list of [America's Leading Doctors 2025](#). The list includes:

**Ghadeer Alami, DPM** – Podiatry

**Constantine T. Andrew, MD** – Vascular Surgery

**Dan W. Choi, MD** – Cardiothoracic Surgery

**Christopher Chong, MD** – Sports Medicine

**Keith P. Meslin, MD** – Colorectal Surgery

To consult the full list of names and discover *Newsweek's* methodology, [click here](#).

## Siberite-2 Research Trial: Efficacy and Safety of Induction Therapy in Crohn's Disease

Virtua Research periodically shares trials for your consideration. A brief synopsis of the eligibility criteria is listed below. Physician colleagues are vital to the success of the research program, even when they are not participating as investigators. Sanket Patel, DO, director of the Virtua Crohn's & Colitis Center and clinical assistant professor at the Rowan-Virtua School of Osteopathic Medicine, is the principal investigator for this trial.

Siberite-2 is a Phase III, multicenter, double-blind, placebo-controlled study to assess the efficacy and safety of induction therapy with RO7790121 in patients with moderately to severely active Crohn's disease.

RO7790121 is a fully human neutralizing immunoglobulin G1 monoclonal antibody against tumor necrosis factor-like ligand. It plays a central role in the regulation of gut mucosal immunity and participates in immunological and fibrosis pathways involved in inflammatory bowel disease pathogenesis by binding its receptor, death receptor 3.

Therapeutic options have expanded substantially over the past decade, with biologics and small-molecule treatments now available in addition to conventional therapies. However, a high, unmet medical need remains for treatments with better benefit-risk profiles that attenuate inflammation and clinical sequelae and provide sustained control to improve the long-term prognosis of patients with Crohn's.

A brief synopsis of the eligibility criteria is listed below.

### **Inclusion Criteria**

- Confirmed diagnosis of Crohn's with supportive clinical, endoscopic, and histopathological evidence

### **Exclusion Criteria**

- Participant with a history of <sup>3</sup> 3 bowel resections
- Two missing segments of the following five segments: terminal ileum, right colon, transverse colon, sigmoid, left colon, and rectum

The remaining inclusion/exclusion criteria are extensive and can be shared by reaching out to our research team. If you have a patient who meets the criteria above, please contact the Virtua Research team at [research@virtua.org](mailto:research@virtua.org) and a research coordinator will review their eligibility with you.

## **Submit Your Research Ideas for Grant Funding**

Virtua's Office of Philanthropy and Virtua's Center for Nursing Excellence and Innovation are gathering ideas for research proposals that we can submit for seed funding from the New Jersey Health Foundation this fall. The NJHF offers two funding streams, and we can submit multiple requests:

1. **Research projects (up to \$50,000 per project)** supporting promising studies that can lead to larger grants
2. **Community health, social science, and educational programs (up to \$35,000 per project)** that address important health-related societal challenges

If you have a research idea suitable for consideration, please complete this brief interest survey by **Sept. 2**.

### [NJHF Idea Intake Survey](#)

A kickoff meeting will be held on **Sept. 8** to share full details about the opportunity, explain the internal submission process, review available support to prepare your proposal, and answer your questions. The internal submission deadline will be **Oct. 15**.

More information and additional resources can be found using this link: [NJHF Resources](#)

All applications to the NJHF must be submitted through the Virtua Health Foundation—do **not** contact or submit directly to the New Jersey Health Foundation. Contact Amy Glasofer, director of investigator initiated research, at [aglasofer@virtua.org](mailto:aglasofer@virtua.org) for questions or to learn more about the funding opportunity. Thank you for your interest and for helping us prepare strong proposals!

## **Pilot to Improve ICU Experience to Launch, Thanks to Innovation Fund Award**

Virtua Health is pleased to be one of just 20 organizations nationwide selected to receive the prestigious 2025 Nursing Innovation Fund award from AARP and the American Association of Critical Care Nurses. This competitive grant supports projects that deliver innovative and scalable solutions to strengthen the nursing workforce, foster healthy work environments, and enhance nurse recruitment and retention. With this funding, Virtua will launch a pilot of the ICU Liberation Campaign at Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, advancing critical care and improving outcomes for patients and staff alike.

“This pilot means better outcomes for patients in the ICU—it’s about increasing their chances of survival and getting them back to their normal lives at home with their families,” said Emilio Mazza, MD, PhD, ICU medical director at Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital.

Set to launch in the coming weeks, the ICU pilot is an interprofessional initiative that aims to relieve patients from the potentially harmful side effects of an ICU stay and provides evidence-based strategies in a comprehensive bundle for the entire critical care team.

This pilot program is also made possible thanks to the generosity of Virtua Health Foundation Trustee Chris Poyatt and his wife, Maggie.

Learn more about the ICU Liberation Campaign [here](#).

## Unique Partnership Enhances Health of Camden Residents

The Healthy Neighbor program—an innovative alliance between Virtua and global health technology firm Medtronic LABS—marks its two-year anniversary this month. The program has shown impressive results among its 250-plus patients, who live in Camden with chronic diseases and various social needs:

- 74% of patients with uncontrolled hypertension achieved meaningful improvement (15-point mean drop in systolic blood pressure).
- 69% of patients with uncontrolled diabetes achieved meaningful improvements (1.2% mean drop in A1C).

“When we first met with Virtua, we knew this was a great opportunity to bring our learnings from community-based care models in Asia and Africa to the U.S. and continue to innovate,” said Lauren Leccese, head of U.S. programs at Medtronic LABS.

Virtua and Medtronic LABS have even created a toolkit that other health systems can use to establish their own Healthy Neighbor programs. Read more at [Medtronic.com](#).

## Practicing Excellence

Last week was our final week highlighting the Guiding Principle **WE Communicate Thoughtfully**. This week is a catch-up week, and beginning the week of **Aug. 25**, we'll introduce our next Guiding Principle: **WE Invite Belonging**, featuring Rhonda Jordan, our EVP and chief human resources officer.

**Call to action:** [Click to view all the tips](#) that focused on the Guiding Principle WE Communicate Thoughtfully and catch up on those that you may have missed from your 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:

“Dr. Naik far exceeded my expectations. Extremely thorough, answered all my questions, was patient, and very professional! Highly recommend!” (**Sharvani Naik, DO** – Family Medicine)

“Dr. Kaufman always takes the time to listen to my concerns and checks in on my overall well-being. I always feel that I am in good hands with her care.” (**Jodi Kaufman, MD** – Internal Medicine)

“Her approach was both thoughtful and meticulous, which gave me a great sense of confidence in my care. She was kind, attentive, and truly listened to my concerns. Her professionalism and compassion made a difficult experience much more manageable, and I am grateful for the care she provided.” (**Sweta Chandela, MD** –Cardiology, Women’s Cardiovascular Disease, Vascular Medicine)

“I highly recommend Virtua Neurosciences. I don't really do reviews, but I'm doing one because it was just a beautiful experience.” (**Dana Quinn, PA** – Neurology)

“Dr. Cavalieri is a knowledgeable and professional physician. He is compassionate and takes the time to listen to your medical concerns and provide the necessary care.” (**Thomas Cavalieri, DO** – Geriatric Medicine)

“Dr. Loccisano is very professional, yet down to earth and pleasant. He asks questions and listens. He gives you recommendations and suggestions so you can make informed choices and decisions in care.” (**Antonio Loccisano, DO** – Sports Medicine)

“Dr. Dikengil’s knowledge and thoroughness put me at ease. She spent a lot of time explaining everything in detail and what she felt our next steps should be.” (**Fusun Dikengil, MD** – Pulmonology)

“She is easy to talk to and answered all of my questions in a manner that I could understand. I am very pleased with my choice of Dr. Marple as my physician.” (**Jill Marple, MD** – Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation)

## **Virtua in the News**

**Virtua Surgeon Explains Phillies Pitcher’s Health Challenge**

When the Phillies announced that pitcher Zack Wheeler had a blood clot near his shoulder, vascular surgeon Michael Lieb, DO, explained the condition and its treatments. Two days later, Wheeler had the clot removed—and Dr. Lieb discussed that procedure and what the 35-year-old’s recovery might look like. Watch on CBS 3, [part 1](#) and [part 2](#).

### **Rowan-Virtua Researcher Awarded \$1.9M NIH Grant for Heart Health Study**

As reported earlier this month in [Clinician Update](#), a faculty member at the Rowan-Virtua School of Osteopathic Medicine has received a \$1.9 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to explore how the mineral magnesium might help prevent or even reverse heart failure. Shanmughapriya Santhanam, PhD, associate professor of biomedical sciences, will lead the five-year study. Read in [ROI-NJ](#) and [Rowan Today](#).

## **15th Annual Cardiology for Primary Care Symposium, Oct. 4**

Join us for this year’s Cardiology for Primary Care Symposium, part of the Key Essentials for Optimizing Patient Care five-block CME series presented by the Rowan-Virtua School of Osteopathic Medicine and offering up to 5.5 AOA Category 1-A and 5.5 AMA PRA Category 1 credits™.

The event will take place virtually on Saturday, Oct. 4, from 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. This year’s agenda includes the following topics and speakers:

- Geriatric Medicine - Kevin Overbeck, DO
- Advances in Hypertension Treatment - Kimberly Hagen, PA
- Aortic Disease: What PCPs Should Know - Eden Payabyab, MD
- Evaluation and Treatment of the Female Cardiac Patient - Nikhita Kothari, DO
- Achieving Health Equity in the Cardiovascular Population - Troy Randle, DO
- Cardiac Manifestations of Rheumatologic Conditions - Humaira Khan, MD
- The Cardiac - Pulmonary Interface - Jonathan Galli, MD

The registration fee for the individual Cardiology for Primary Care program is \$149. (VMG clinicians: This event—and the series—is reimbursable through your annual CME allotment.) These events are free to residents, fellows, and medical students. [Go here to register for this event](#).

Note: The full five-block series includes (in addition to cardiology) content featuring psychiatry, geriatrics, pediatrics, and women's health. Registration for the full series is \$695. [Go here to review the full brochure and for more details.](#) For questions about the series, email at [cme@rowan.edu](mailto:cme@rowan.edu).

## A Colleague's Journey from Martial Arts Master to Supply Chain Sensei

Khatib Abdelaziz, director of supply chain, applies the discipline of martial arts to the complex world of health care logistics. In just two years, he has used his engineering and manufacturing background to streamline the delivery of critical supplies, ensuring they reach colleagues by the next morning or within hours for urgent needs. In this *Here for Good Inside Edition* with Virtua President & CEO Dennis Pullin, Khatib explains how he is spearheading a major automation upgrade inspired by the efficiency of Amazon that will double the warehouse's storage capacity and significantly improve forecasting—a crucial lesson from the pandemic. Khatib's leadership style, shaped by his time as a martial arts instructor, focuses on instilling discipline, confidence, and the mindset to never give up.

[Click to learn more from Khatib.](#)



Virtua Health

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