

Clinician Update

April 22, 2021

Virtua Structural Heart Team Expands Use of MitraClip in Heart Failure Patients with Functional MR

On Monday, April 19, the Structural Heart team at Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital successfully performed its first two MitraClip procedures for functional (or secondary) mitral regurgitation on patients with heart failure.

First approved by the FDA in late 2013 for severe, symptomatic primary mitral regurgitation, Abbott's MitraClip remains the only transcatheter mitral valve repair (TMVR) device on the market. Operators perform edge-to-edge repair by using the device to clip together the leaflets of the mitral valve.

Recently, CMS extended Medicare reimbursement for TMVR to include functional mitral regurgitation resulting from heart failure, according to a [revised National Coverage Determination](#) (NCD). Functional MR may occur in patients with heart failure and left ventricular dilatation. Severity of functional MR is strongly associated with decreased quality of life, increased rates of hospitalization for heart failure, and shortened patient survival.

Both patients had a severely diminished ejection fraction with severe MR. The team, led by Ibrahim Moussa, DO, FACC, FSCAI, RPVI, implanted a single clip (the new and improved MitraClip G4) in each patient, which reduced the severity of the MR to mild. Both patients went home the following day.

"A lot of hard work went on behind the scenes to reach this milestone," said Dr. Moussa "I want to congratulate and thank the team and administrative staff for making this important therapy available to our heart failure patients. I also want to thank Dr. Harry South and Dr. Jeff Namey for referring the two patients."

Virtua Now Offering Breakthrough Lung Treatment for Severe Emphysema

Pulmonary specialists at Virtua are now offering Bronchoscopic Lung Volume Reduction (BLVR) with endobronchial valve (EBV) placement for patients with severe emphysema and COPD. This FDA-approved, minimally invasive procedure is used to treat end-stage COPD and advanced emphysema.

"This is such a big moment for members of our community who have been living with significant breathing issues," said Virtua thoracic surgeon Matthew Puc, MD, who, along with interventional pulmonologist Syed Riaz, MD, are now providing this service as part of a multidisciplinary team. "With this advanced procedure, we're able to improve lung function by precisely targeting damaged areas. We're beyond excited to have this tool in our armamentarium as it will certainly and positively impact our patients' quality of life."

The procedure takes roughly 30 to 60 minutes to complete. During that time, a small scope is guided to insert endobronchial valves into the patient's hyperinflated lobes, allowing trapped air to escape and preventing air from re-entering. This essentially allows the healthier areas of the lungs to work more effectively.

"This benefits of this approach include fewer side effects, less pain, and a shorter hospital stay," said Dr. Riaz. "Post-procedure, patients typically stay in the hospital for three days per expert consensus, barring complication."

It's important to note that this procedure is not curative. It does, however, fundamentally improve patients' quality of life and enables them to take bigger, fuller breaths. To learn more about Virtua's comprehensive lung program, click [here](#).

April 27 – Go Live Date for ADT Requirements for Cures Act

Tuesday, April 27, is the next Cures Act milestone as regulations take effect involving Admission, Discharge, and Transfer (ADT) notifications. While May 1 is the national deadline for going live on the ADT Event Notifications requirements, Virtua plans to be in accordance with the mandate a few days earlier.

The new rule requires hospitals to share electronic ADT event notifications with certain other providers so that the care teams have the most up-to-date and accurate information about their patients. The goal is to help monitor patients throughout the entire continuum of hospital care to improve outcomes while reducing preventable readmissions.

Virtua has been sending admission and discharge communication to primary care providers prior to this mandate. As an organization, we are revising the communication for clearer identification by other providers when their patient is treated at a Virtua hospital (i.e. adding the Virtua logo/hospital name to all communication, including InBasket messaging). All other hospitals in our area should be following the mandate as well. As a provider, you may be seeing ADT notifications from any hospital that treats your patient.

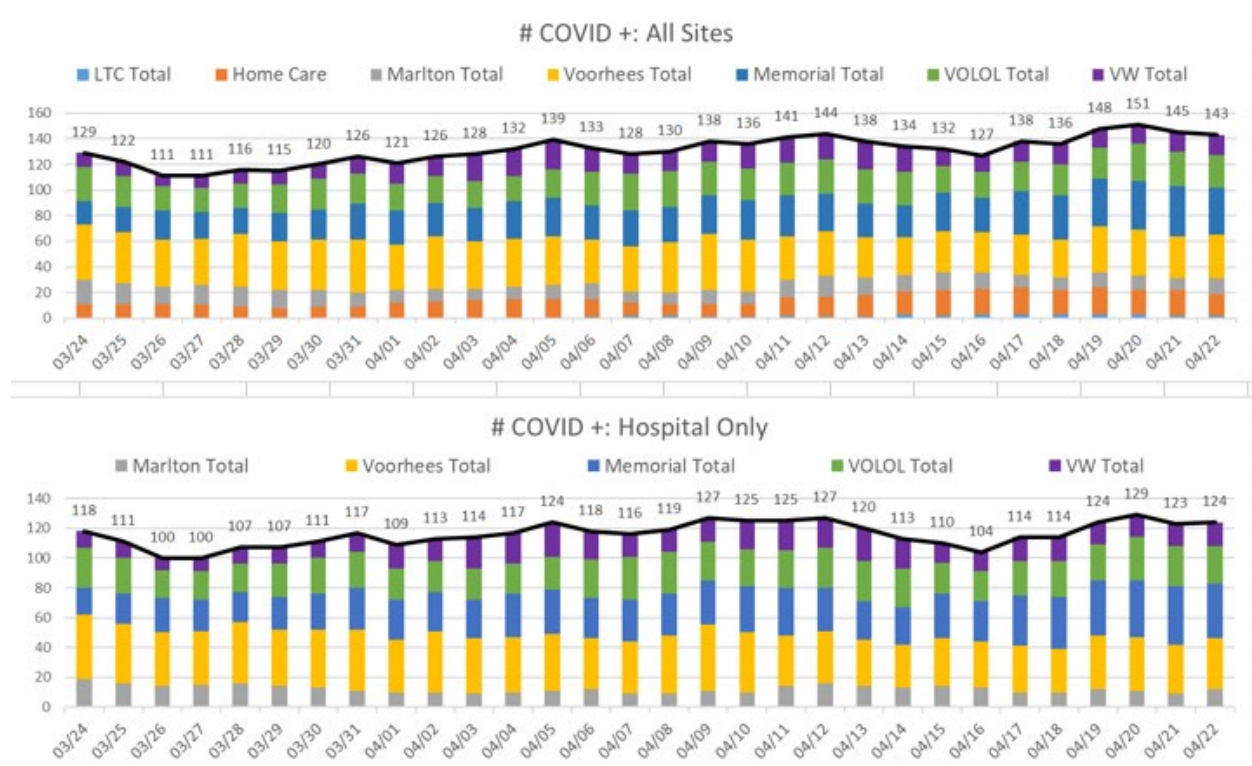
In related Cures Act news, the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) recently issued new guidance on the timing of the release of test results to a portal. Virtua is working through this new information and will notify clinicians of any changes to our current process in the very near future.

Meanwhile, we encourage clinicians to continue having the conversation with patients around the availability of results through MyChart, and the possibility that they may receive results sooner than they may expect or before the provider receives the result. Patients should be assured that there is a process in place if test results are critical. For inpatients, the patient's nurse or testing department ensures providers are notified after any critical results. As a reminder, clinicians may "unshare" a note, or delay the release of a result, in only two scenarios:

- 1) To prevent harm, when the sharing of information to MyChart is reasonably likely to endanger the life or physical safety of the patient or another person, or
- 2) If the patient (or his/her legal representative) has specifically requested that the note not be shared to his/her MyChart

In February, Virtua went live with the implementation of the key components of the 21st Century Cures Act, well ahead of the national mandate of April 5. We will continue to provide updates as various elements of the Act go into effect and guidance is further refined. Via [Digital 411](#), Virtua has created a special [Cures Act Resource link](#). Check back frequently to find additional tip sheets, talking points, and more.

Virtua COVID-19 Census



Fast Facts:

- The rate of transmission in New Jersey is currently at .93.
- Locally, in the tri-county area, there have been a total of 2,483 confirmed deaths, as of 1 p.m. today. The state also reports “probable” deaths from COVID-19, with figures shared separately on the [state dashboard](#). For the three counties, probable deaths would account for an additional 195 fatalities.
- The total number of cases are as follows:
 - Burlington County 37,064
 - Camden County 46,791
 - Gloucester County 25,483
- In a new fast fact, the state has added a new tab to its [dashboard](#). Choose “Vaccination Overview” to keep tabs on how New Jersey is doing. As of today, a total of 6,310,065 doses of vaccine have been administered.

Update on Pause for Johnson & Johnson Vaccine Administration

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) prepares to meet again **tomorrow, April 23** about the pause on the use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

ACIP, which provides guidance to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), met on April 14 following a recommendation by the CDC and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to

pause the use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine out of an abundance of caution upon reviewing data involving six U.S. cases of a rare and severe type of blood clot in individuals after receiving the vaccine.

Following that recommendation, the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) suspended the administration of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine across all vaccination sites until further notice from the CDC and FDA.

In an appearance on [CNN](#) last weekend, **Dr. Anthony Fauci** anticipated the outcome of Friday's ACIP meeting. He said, "What I imagine we'll see is that they will come back with some sort of a warning or restriction... I do think that we will get [the Johnson & Johnson vaccine] back in some manner or form. But what I am sure, I hope, that we don't see anything extended beyond Friday — we need to get a decision one way or another."

In the meantime, NJDOH is encouraging residents to keep their vaccine appointments for the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines, which have been demonstrated to be safe and effective and use different technology than the method used for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

To review the differences between the vaccines, the CDC has produced answers to commonly asked questions, information on side effects, and what activities you can start doing after vaccination. Learn more about the [Pfizer](#) and [Moderna](#) vaccines.

Our Shot 2 Save Lives

Virtua Health's mission is to help the members of our communities be well, get well, and stay well. Now, through the newly launched "Get the Vaccine to Save Lives" campaign, Virtua has joined the Mayo Clinic, Cleveland Clinic, and other leading health systems to help our nation be well, get well, and stay well.

Elements of the initiative include ads in print/digital publications, PSAs on television and radio, and an interactive social media pledge.

Virtua invites you to visit ourshot2savelives.org to learn more. While there, you can download special graphics for Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn that encourage vaccination. **Remember to use hashtag #ourshot2savelives in any social media posts.**

We encourage you to share Virtua's [YouTube page](#) to watch a short video that emphasizes this crucial moment in time and how each of us can contribute to a safer, healthier future.

Virtua has given more than 320,000 vaccine doses to date, and there are still more people — and more colleagues — who we need to reach. Please share this campaign and the many vaccine messages that have been provided so that we can set a healthy example and protect more lives.

Celebrating Earth Day

Virtua Health recognizes Earth Day, a celebration of environmental protection. Our planet is an amazing place, but it needs our help to thrive. That's why each year on April 22, more than a billion people celebrate Earth Day to protect the planet. [Help grow the movement](#) and make our world a happier, healthier place to live.

Black Maternal Health Week

We recently shared information about Black Maternal Health Week and Virtua's work to bring attention to the topic. On the national level, the White House on Tuesday issued its [first-ever presidential proclamation marking Black Maternal Health Week](#) as part of the administration's broader efforts to draw attention to and address the vast racial gaps in pregnancy and childbirth-related deaths and complications in the United States.

"Black women in our country are facing a maternal health crisis," said **Vice President Kamala Harris**. "We know the primary reasons why: systemic racial inequities and implicit bias."

In addition to the presidential proclamation, the administration outlined several actions to specifically address maternal health issues through the American Rescue Plan, which included implicit bias training for health care providers and a provision that allows states to expand postpartum Medicaid coverage.

Click to read an [article from the New York Times](#) for additional details.

National Lab Week

Medical Laboratory Professionals Week (April 18 to 24) is an annual celebration of medical laboratory professionals and pathologists who play a vital role in health care and patient advocacy. **Ekundayo Ogunkanmi**, lead medical technologist at Virtua Voorhees Hospital, shared a video from the American Society for Clinical Pathology, recognizing lab professionals on the [Virtua Colleague Facebook Group page](#). Click to view the [video](#).

National Volunteer Week

National Volunteer Week (April 18 to 24) is an annual observance recognizing volunteers providing vital support in their communities. At Virtua, **Tiffany Bennett**, director of volunteer services, celebrated our volunteers by Honk, Shout, and Wave recognition events. Visit the [Virtua Colleague Facebook Group page](#) to view the photos.

WE Applaud Jeanann Sousou Coppola

Congratulations to Virtua midwife **Jeanann Sousou Coppola** for being inducted into the 2021 Fellows of [American College of Nurse-Midwives](#) for demonstrating leadership, clinical excellence, outstanding scholarship, and professional achievement within and outside the midwifery profession. Jeanann is one of 81 midwives nationwide to receive this honor this year.

Women of Virtua Event — Make a Difference in our Community

On **April 28**, learn about three programs that are making a meaningful impact to our communities and patients — the Cherry Hill Free Clinic, Virtua Community Health Engagement, and the NJ-CEED program. Find out how your talents can contribute to making a difference.

Register for the event by clicking on the hyperlink below:

<https://virtualearning.csod.com/samldefault.aspx?returnUrl=/ui/lms-learning-details/app/event/38286743-2232-4afd-a63e-497839257b78>

Softball Anyone?

We invite you to join Virtua's colleague softball league for the 2021 season. All experience levels are welcome. Games will be held on either Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday nights. Game start-time is 6:15 p.m. Click to [sign up](#).

In Case You Missed It... Musicians On Call

Musicians on Call, an organization that delivers the healing power of music to hospital patients, hosted a virtual performance yesterday with local artist John DePaul, playing exclusively for select hospitals and health systems in our region, including Virtua. We invite our colleagues, patients, and guests to view and share the 30-minute show found here on [YouTube](#).