

Clinician Update

April 6, 2023

South Jersey's First Proton Therapy Center Welcomes Patients

The team at the [Penn Medicine | Virtua Health Proton Therapy Center](#) began treating their first patients this week. The much-anticipated, high-tech facility offers the most advanced form of radiation treatment available. It is the first center of its kind in South Jersey, one of fewer than 50 in the U.S.

Proton therapy offers new hope for recovery, survival, and improved quality of life. It can be used for many cancer types, especially in highly sensitive areas like the brain, spinal cord, heart, lungs, or bowels, and cancers that cannot be completely removed by surgery.

“We are able to direct high-energy beams of radiation with pencil-point accuracy to target and eliminate cancer cells, both near the surface and deep within the body,” said radiation oncologist Catherine Kim, MD, medical director of Penn Medicine | Virtua Health Radiation Oncology. “This makes proton therapy particularly good at treating tumors in hard-to-reach places near critical organs, or to re-radiate tumors that have recurred. Unlike traditional photon radiation therapy, protons have a unique stopping power. This results in less damage to nearby healthy tissues and organs.”

The Proton Center is located on the Virtua Voorhees campus and connected to the Penn Medicine | Virtua Health Radiation Oncology suite. Patients have access to comprehensive care through the [Penn Medicine | Virtua Health Cancer Program](#).

To learn more, visit [PennVirtuaProton.org](#) or call our proton coordinator at 856-247-7334.

Virtua's Network of Ambulatory Surgery Centers Now at 35

Virtua's network of ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs) has grown to 35. Virtua recently welcomed Valley Pain Center in Huntingdon Valley, PA. The new addition joins a network of surgery centers in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware—all state-of-the-art health care facilities that transform the outpatient experience and provide the highest caliber care for diagnostic and therapeutic procedures and surgery.

All the facilities are state licensed, nationally accredited and Medicare certified, ensuring adherence to the highest quality and safety standards. Virtua's ambulatory surgery centers provide a safe and convenient alternative to hospital-based outpatient care, with a strong track record of positive patient outcomes and satisfaction. *Newsweek* recently recognized 14 Virtua ASCs in the top 26 ASCs in New Jersey.

Click [here](#) to see a map of all 35 ASCs in the Virtua network.

Celebrating the Launch of Practicing Excellence!

From debuting the [dance video](#) to [chalking the walk](#) to distributing desserts at the hospital cafeterias, Practicing Excellence has arrived! Here are three recommendations for making the most of launch week.

1. Ensure you have registered your account **and** signed up for the *Patient Experience Program*. This second part seems to be where many colleagues have become a bit confused. But that's OK! If you registered for Practicing Excellence several weeks ago, you enrolled in the *Welcome Program*. Now we'd like you to enroll in an additional *Patient Experience Program* if you have not already. [This video is your step-by-step guide](#). Grab your phone and follow along.

Please note: When you enroll in the *Patient Experience* program, you will be asked to provide a join code. There are different [codes](#) for different subsets of the Virtua workforce, including specific clinician groups. [Click here to view this graphic](#) and enter the code that corresponds with the learning track.

2. Watch the Week One video that corresponds with your learning track. Here's a [helpful chart](#) that shows the Week One and Week Two video for each track. It is also available on the [Practicing Excellence page of the Colleague Corner](#).
3. Don't just watch the tip. Give the "try this challenge" a go. We are all learners and are establishing new ways of applying these teachings. Stay positive!

For a reminder to see how to register your Practicing Excellence account, click [here](#) for a previous *Clinician Update* now posted on Digital 411.

To help our colleagues in this journey, the team from Practicing Excellence offers "office hours" to answer questions regarding activation, integration, or any additional support you may need. Office hours are Wednesdays from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m., as well as Thursdays from 3 to 4 p.m., now through April 20. Click to [log on during office hours](#).

To view all Practicing Excellence resources, for those on the Virtua computer network, visit the [Practicing Excellence page](#) on the Colleague Corner.

21st Century CURES Act Reaches Year 2 Milestone Surveying the Perspectives of Patients

In the spring of 2021, new federal rules went into effect mandating that health care providers make nearly all test results and clinical notes immediately available to patients. Virtua's Cures Act Steering Committee, which included representatives from all areas of the organization, including administration, VMG, IT, nursing, and communications, worked to help lead clinicians into the successful

implementation. The reasoning for the rules at the time was the evidence that suggests that patients may gain important clinical benefits by reviewing their medical records. However, there were some concerns about the effects of releasing test results to patients before clinicians offer counsel or interpretation.

In [a recent multi-site survey of more than 8,000 patients who accessed their test results via an online patient portal account](#), researchers at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and colleagues found that users overwhelmingly supported receiving the results immediately, even if their provider had not yet reviewed them. The findings, published in [JAMA Network Open](#), showed only a small subset of patients reported experiencing additional worry after receiving abnormal test results. In addition, pre-counseling by the health care team before tests were ordered was linked to reduced worry among patients with abnormal results.

“What we are seeing overall is our patient population embracing this empowerment offered to them via the transparency, as the rule intended,” said James Gamble, MD, Virtua’s medical director of informatics. “That said, on occasion we have had patients experience a seriously abnormal test result prior to speaking to their physician. For that reason, it is important to stress the value of pre-test counseling and the importance of provider-patient communication.”

OpenNotes is an international movement advocating for greater transparency in health care. Read its reaction to the survey [here](#).

Additionally, OpenNotes will be hosting a meeting on patient portal use for older adults and care partners on Tuesday, April 11, from 2 to 3 p.m. They welcome health care professionals, patients, care partners, and EHR vendors to join us in creating patient portal-based solutions to help older adults and their care partners get the information they need. [Register to attend](#).

For Cures Act resources, a reminder, Virtua has a special [Cures Act Resource link](#) on [Digital 411](#).

Virtua Participates in Modern Healthcare’s Best Places to Work Survey

As previously shared in the *Clinician Update*, Virtua is participating in *Modern Healthcare’s* “Best Places to Work” survey. On March 31, a random selection of 650 full-time and part-time colleagues received an email from Workforce Research Group inviting them to take a short survey.

The email came from Surveys@WorkforceRG.com and the subject line is “Your Voice Counts – Best Places to Work in Healthcare.” Note: for colleagues who have the 365 version of Microsoft Outlook, this email is located in your "Other" inbox rather than your "Focused" inbox.

If you received this email but haven’t taken the survey yet, we ask that you please carve out 10 minutes to complete it and provide your honest feedback. Please do not report this as spam or phishing. The survey is confidential.

Please do not forward your email invitation to another colleague. Each link is unique and can only be used once. The participation deadline is April 14.

Two hundred sixty colleagues must complete the survey for us to be considered. We encourage you to check your email inboxes for this important request. Thank you in advance for supporting this initiative.

Upcoming Events

Do You Hear Me, Do You See Me: Panel Discussion on Black Maternal Health

April 12, 12 to 1 p.m.

In recognition of Black Maternal Health Week (April 11 to 17), the Black and African-American Colleague Community invites you to join *Do You Hear Me, Do You See Me?* a virtual panel discussion regarding black maternal health. The panel will include Saleema McNeil, CEO and reproductive therapist of Oshun Family Center; Veronica Sturgis, nurse home visitor of the Nurse-Family Partnership, Southern New Jersey Perinatal Cooperative; and Ambrial Smith, project director of Camden Healthy Start, Southern New Jersey Perinatal Cooperative.

Door prizes will be raffled off to registered attendees. Register through the Virtua Learning System: [Do You Hear Me, Do You See Me? Black Maternal Health Stories](#).

Virtua Physicians Talk Up Back Health

April 19, 7 p.m.

In our next Real Talk! Women's Health Chat, our experts will dive into the topic of back pain. Our host, Nicole Michalik from 92.5 XTU, will chat with three experts about the causes of back pain, particularly in women. They will share tips to strengthen muscles, and how to know when it's time to get help.

Speakers include:

Richard DeWitt, physical therapist, Virtua Health

Dr. Kyle Mueller, spine neurosurgeon, Penn Medicine | Virtua Health Neurosciences Program

Dr. James Sanfilippo, spine orthopedic surgeon, Virtua Orthopedics & Spine, Reconstructive Orthopedics

[Click to register](#).

IDEA – Inclusion, Diversity and Equity for All Awareness and Recognition

Virtua wishes a Happy Easter to colleagues who will celebrate on Sunday, April 9. A longstanding Christian holiday, [Easter](#) marks the end to Lent and the resurrection of Jesus.

Additionally, Easter signifies the start of spring for many—complete with traditions such as [Easter egg hunts](#), which is considered a symbol of rebirth across many cultures.

To wish colleagues a Happy Easter, visit WE Applaud on the Colleague Corner or visit www.peopleareeverything.com/virtua. Also, as mentioned in last week's *Clinician Update*, **Passover** continues through Thursday, April 13.

Recognizing the Week of the Young Child

The Week of the Young Child (April 1 to 7) celebrates early learning, young children, and the programs and services that meet their needs. Children thrive in environments—at home, at child care, at school, and in the community—that promote their early learning.

We extend our appreciation to all Virtua colleagues who support children in achieving their potential, including the Virtua Pediatric Rehab Services and the Virtua Child Development Center teams who are dedicated to and support our young learners.

Virtua Pediatric Rehab colleagues provide thousands of services to children, from birth to 21 years old, who have disabilities and/or live in underserved communities. Our team is comprised of more than 120 colleagues who provide developmental, therapeutic, and interpretation services. These colleagues change the lives of thousands of children living in South Jersey.

The amazing team of teachers and staff at the Virtua Child Development Center have provided outstanding quality care to the children of Virtua colleagues for the last 30 years. To celebrate Week of the Young Child, the teachers have engaging activities planned for the children with a family celebration to end the week.