

**Clinician Update**  
**August 26, 2021**

**Vaccine Mandate Update: Weekly Testing to Take Effect**

Earlier this week, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration officially authorized the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for people ages 16 and older, making it the first coronavirus vaccine to receive the agency's full approval. In response to this news, and with consideration to some colleagues' hesitancy regarding the vaccines, Virtua has adjusted the timeline of its COVID-19 vaccine mandate.

Now, colleagues have until **Wednesday, Sept. 15** to receive a first dose of the Pfizer vaccine. This ensures that all Virtua colleagues receive the full series of the Pfizer vaccine by **Wednesday, Oct. 6**. Those colleagues who choose to receive the two-dose Moderna vaccine must receive a first dose by **Wednesday, Sept. 8**. Those colleagues who choose to receive the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) vaccine, one dose, must receive it by **Wednesday, Sept. 15**.

On Aug. 6, 2021, **Governor Phil Murphy** signed Executive Order 252, requiring health care workers who are not fully vaccinated to submit to weekly COVID-19 testing. Any colleague who is not fully vaccinated—including those who have received or are awaiting a medical or religious exemption—must participate in weekly COVID-19 testing.

According to the executive order, a person is deemed fully vaccinated two weeks after receiving a second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or two weeks after the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine. The order extends to all Virtua staff, regardless of employment type or whether an individual is in a patient-facing role.

**Details about the testing process—including a Q&A—will be available soon.**

While the overwhelming majority of Virtua-affiliated clinicians have received the vaccine, we continue to ask for you to encourage hesitant colleagues to get their shots. Virtua encourages any colleague who is not yet vaccinated to make a vaccination plan right away. Virtua will offer the now fully approved Pfizer vaccine at the Barry D. Brown Health Education Center (the HEC) from 8 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. on the following days:

**Monday, Aug. 30**

**Tuesday, Aug. 31**

Colleagues may email [covidmegasite@virtua.org](mailto:covidmegasite@virtua.org) or call **856-325-4222** to schedule an appointment.

As always, if you have received the COVID-19 vaccine from a pharmacy or clinic outside of Virtua, please send proof of vaccination to [covidvaccinedocumentation@virtua.org](mailto:covidvaccinedocumentation@virtua.org).

Thank you for your support!

**Colleague Flu Vaccination Program Begins Wednesday, Sept. 1**

Flu vaccine season is fast approaching. Help protect our patients, visitors, and yourselves from the flu by getting a flu vaccination, especially as we continue to navigate through COVID-19.

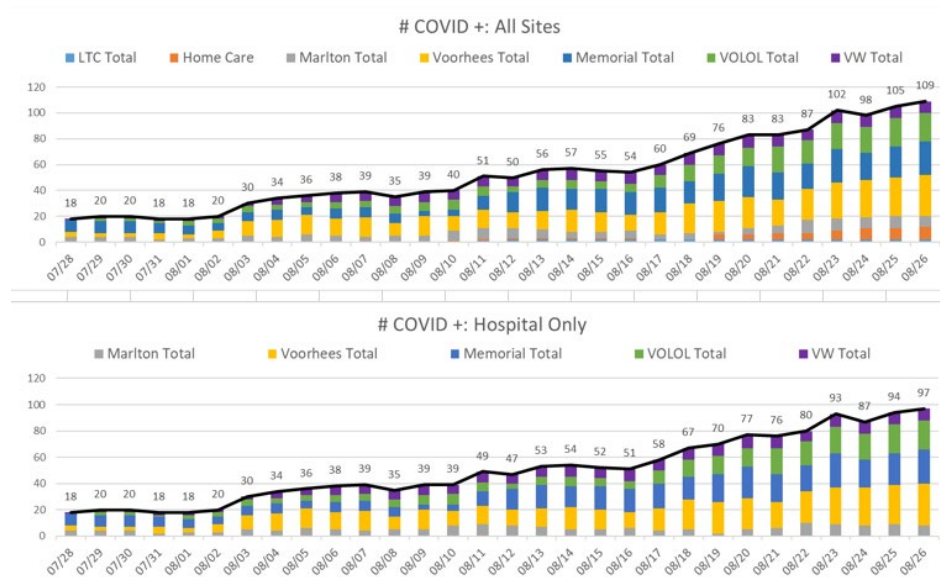
Flu shots are mandatory for all Virtua colleagues. Virtua will begin offering free flu shots on **Wednesday, Sept. 1**. All colleagues should receive their flu shots by 11:59 p.m. on **Tuesday, Nov. 2**.

Please note the following changes to this year’s program:

- There will be tented outdoor clinics to enable social distancing, as well as indoor flu clinics as long as social distancing requirements are still met and maintained.
- Virtua Medical Group (VMG) colleagues will continue to be directed to receive their flu shots from designated practice extenders, coordinated by VMG leadership.
- Corporate colleagues who are working offsite can attend any of our flu clinics or can choose to receive the flu vaccine at their primary care practice locations or a CVS Minute Clinic, where colleagues with Virtua medical coverage can obtain flu vaccinations at no cost.
- All colleagues who receive their flu shots outside of Virtua must scan and email proof of vaccination with the following information to [flu@virtua.org](mailto:flu@virtua.org):
  - Colleague Name
  - Colleague ID Number
  - Date of Vaccination
  - Vaccine Lot Number
  - Vaccine Expiration Date
  - Administered in Left/Right Arm
  - Who Administered the Vaccine
  - Location of Vaccine Administration
- Instructions to apply for a medical and religious exemption/accommodate requests may be found on the VINE under the “Colleague Flu” button.

Please click on the “Colleague Flu Vaccinations” button on the VINE next week to view the flu vaccination schedule, list of flu extenders, and flu exemption forms. Questions are welcome. Email [flu@virtua.org](mailto:flu@virtua.org) or call **856-761-3900, option 2**.

### COVID-19 Census



## Latest COVID-19 Fast Facts

- Sadly, yesterday marked the first time since May that COVID-19 hospitalizations in New Jersey rose surpassed 1,000. According to the New Jersey Hospital Association, the resurgence is a result of the Delta variant, which is now the dominant strain in our state.
- The rate of transmission in New Jersey is now 1.17.
- The total number of cases as of 3 p.m. are as follows:
  - Burlington County: 40,755 cases
  - Camden County: 51,944 cases
  - Gloucester County: 28,294 cases
- COVID-associated mortality for Camden, Burlington, and Gloucester counties: 2,690.
- The state's Vaccination Overview dashboard reports 11,005,193 doses of vaccine have been administered.

## AHA Recognizes Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital and Virtua Emergency Medical Services

Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital has received the American Heart Association's (AHA) **2021 Gold Plus Get With The Guidelines-Heart Failure Quality Achievement Award** for our commitment to caring for patients living with heart failure.

The award recognizes Virtua's commitment to ensuring people with heart failure receive the most appropriate treatment according to nationally recognized, research-based guidelines founded in the latest scientific evidence. The goal is speeding recovery and reducing hospital readmissions for heart failure patients.

"We are dedicated to improving the quality of care for our patients with heart failure by implementing evidence-based guidelines, including medications, attention to diet and exercise, and implantable internal defibrillators and monitoring devices such as CardioMems," said **Theresa Rowe**, director of the Virtua Heart Failure Program. "The end goal is to ensure more people in South Jersey can experience longer, healthier lives."

"We are pleased to recognize Virtua for their commitment to heart failure care," said Dr. Clyde W. Yancy, national chairperson of the AHA Heart Failure systems of care advisory group and chief, division of cardiology at Northwestern University, Feinberg School of Medicine. "Hospitals that follow Get with the Guidelines protocols often see fewer readmissions and lower mortality rates—a win for health care systems, families, and communities."

Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes also received the association's **Target: Type 2 Honor Roll award**. To qualify for this recognition, hospitals must meet quality measures developed with more than 90% of compliance for 12 consecutive months for the "Overall Diabetes Cardiovascular Initiative Composite Score."

Additionally, **Virtua Emergency Medical Services (EMS) received the AHA Mission: Lifeline EMS Gold Achievement Award** for implementing specific quality improvement measures to treat patients who suffer severe heart attacks.

Each year, more than 250,000 people experience an ST elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI), the deadliest type of heart attack, caused by a blockage of blood flow to the heart that requires timely

treatment. To prevent death, it is critical to restore blood flow as quickly as possible, either by mechanically opening the blocked vessel or by providing clot-busting medication.

The AHA's Mission: Lifeline program helps reduce barriers to prompt treatment for heart attacks—starting from when 9-1-1 is called, to EMS transport and continuing through hospital treatment and discharge. Optimal care for heart attack patients takes coordination between the individual hospital, EMS, and health care system.

“Virtua is honored to be recognized by the AHA for our dedication to providing optimal care for heart attack patients,” said **Jim Newman**, assistant vice president of Virtua EMS. “The Mission: Lifeline program puts proven knowledge and guidelines to work on a daily basis so patients have the best possible chance of survival.”

### **Virtua Honored as a Best Employer by Forbes**

Virtua has been named by *Forbes* magazine as one of America's Best Employers. Virtua is also one of only five New Jersey health systems to land on this list two years in a row. What's especially noteworthy about this recognition is that it is driven by employees and their anonymous responses and accolades for where they work.

Forbes partnered with market research company Statista to compile its third annual list of America's Best Employers By State. Statista surveyed 80,000 Americans working for businesses with at least 500 employees. All the surveys were anonymous, allowing participants to openly share their opinions.

Click to view the [article](#). Congratulations, Virtua colleagues!

### **Virtua Willingboro Celebrates 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

It all started in the late 1950s. A group of 11 physicians led by **Dr. Meyer Abrams** saw the need to develop a hospital in the growing Burlington County community of Willingboro and surrounding towns. Pooling their resources, they purchased property on Sunset Road, worked with architects, contractors, and vendors, and recruited staff to open Rancocas Valley Hospital in August 1961.

On **Aug. 19**, we celebrated Virtua Willingboro's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the hospital cafeteria. Colleagues stopped by to pick up to-go snacks, sign a banner that will hang in the newly renovated lobby, reminisce about the growth of the hospital, and look forward to its bright future with Virtua.

### **Two Upcoming CME Opportunities**

- **5.5 AOA/AMA Credits Offered at Cardiology for Primary Care Symposium** – Virtua's Cardiology for Primary Care Symposium, a virtual event held in conjunction with Rowan School of Medicine, takes place on **Saturday, Sept. 11** from 7:15 a.m. to 1 p.m. Virtual doors open at 6:30 a.m. for vendor exhibits and networking. The event is open to primary care practitioners, physicians, NPs, PAs, and nurses on seeking to learn the latest news and trends in cardiovascular care. In addition to 5.5 AOA Category 1-A and 5.5 AMA PRA Category 1 credits™, this year, the program offers 5.5 nursing contact hours. **Clinicians**, [click here](#) to register for Key Essentials: Cardiology for Primary Care CME – Fall 2021. **Nurses**, [click here](#) to register for CEUs.

- **CME/CEU Credits for Pediatric Health Colleagues and Clinicians** – Virtua’s pediatric partner, Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, is offering a virtual, inter-professional education program for the pediatric health care community of South Jersey, including general pediatricians, pediatric hospitalists and emergency medicine physicians, family medicine physicians, advanced practice providers, pediatric nurses, techs, and all members of the care team. This event will also be held on **Saturday, Sept. 11** from 7:45 a.m. to 1:10 p.m. To learn more and register, visit the [VINE](#) or [chop.cloud-cme.com](http://chop.cloud-cme.com).

### **Women’s Health Latest in Virtua’s *Today* Medical Education Series**

[Women’s Health Today](#) is the latest in Virtua’s newsletter series designed to educate clinicians on the latest therapeutic options and innovative approaches within our specialty services. This month’s issue features our female pelvic health and women’s cardiology services.

Our library of publications for and about Virtua clinicians has a home base on [Digital 411](#), found under [“Additional Resources/Clinician Publications.”](#) There, you can find archived copies of previous issues.

Printed copies are available. Just email [VirtuaClinician@virtua.org](mailto:VirtuaClinician@virtua.org).

### **Virtua in the News**

**Virtua Expert Discusses Kids and COVID-19:** Dr. Martin Topiel, chief of infectious diseases, appeared on a statewide news show to advise on how to protect children and adults from COVID-19—especially as schools prepare to re-open. Watch this NJ News Network show [here](#).

**Virtua’s Success in Improving Maternal Outcomes:** In this American Hospital Association podcast, Dr. Nicole Lamborne, vice president of clinical operations for Women’s Services, discusses how Virtua identified gaps in maternal care and invested in laborists, nurses, and evidence-based practices to lower C-section, hypertension, hemorrhage, and sepsis rates. Listen [here](#).

**What COVID-19 Breakthrough Cases Look Like:** Donna Knapp, assistant vice president of finance at Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, discussed her personal experience of having a breakthrough COVID-19 infection. She noted that being vaccinated helped her to avoid hospitalization. Virtua’s Dr. Martin Topiel is also quoted in this NJ.com story. Read [here](#).

**As Delta Variant Rises, CDC Recommends Masks Indoors:** Rates of COVID-19 transmission are high across our region. The Delta variant “is an incredibly contagious strain of the virus,” explained Dr. Martin Topiel, chief of infectious diseases, urging everyone to get vaccinated. View this NBC 10 story [here](#).

### **Women of Virtua Colleague Community Honors Women’s Equality Day TODAY**

**Aug. 26** is widely recognized as Women’s Equality Day—a day that commemorates the 1920 adoption of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution. This was a pivotal moment in American history, which prohibited federal and state governments from denying the right to vote to citizens of the U.S. on the basis of sex.

In celebration of Women’s Equality Day, colleagues are encouraged to log into the WE Applaud platform on the VINE and send an eCard recognizing this milestone. Additionally, we encourage colleagues to watch this [three-minute video from Reuters](#) discussing the importance of Women’s Equality Day.

To all the pioneering women out there, thank you for continuing to inspire and lead the way in the fight for equality.

### **Are you Heartwired?**

Give for Good connects Virtua colleagues with the opportunity to make a difference through philanthropy. During this time of tremendous stress and extraordinary circumstances, we are witnessing the needs in our community more than ever. Give for Good brings us the chance to make a difference in countless ways by doing something very positive for others and for each other.

- Visit [GiveToVirtua.org/colleagues](https://GiveToVirtua.org/colleagues) to select a Virtua program or service to support and give in the way that's most convenient for you: check, credit card, payroll deduction, or PTO donation.
- Gifts of every amount have an impact on the lives of our patients, our colleagues, and the communities we serve—particularly those who are most vulnerable and in need.
- You can even make a gift in honor of a Virtua colleague, to celebrate an occasion, recognize a job well done, or just because!
- Every gift made by a Virtua colleague at any time counts toward Give for Good, but **Monday, Nov. 2 to Tuesday, Nov. 30** is our 2021 campaign rallying period.
- Seeking a meaningful way to show your love for Virtua and our Culture of WE? Become a Give for Good Ambassador! This is a great volunteer role for colleagues who are fun-loving and creative. Ambassadors spend about 1.5 hours per week, October through early December, helping to promote Give for Good.

Visit [GiveToVirtua.org/colleagues](https://GiveToVirtua.org/colleagues) to learn more or to make an early gift. For questions or to become a Give for Good Ambassador, contact the Office of Philanthropy at **856-355-0830** or [gratitude@virtua.org](mailto:gratitude@virtua.org).