

## Clinician Update

### August 31, 2023

#### 288 Future Physicians Become First Class in Rowan-Virtua SOM

This past Sunday, [Rowan-Virtua School of Osteopathic Medicine](#) officially welcomed the Class of 2027, the first to embark on the medical school journey through Virtua Health's partnership with Rowan that formed the [Virtua Health College of Medicine & Life Sciences](#). Because of the large class size, 288 future physicians took part in two separate white coat ceremonies at the university's main campus in Glassboro.

Students were greeted with remarks from Reginald Blaber, MD, Virtua's executive vice president and chief clinical officer. Dr. Blaber encouraged the students and reminded them that the visible symbol of the white coat "invites them into the lives of others in their most vulnerable moments, trusting you implicitly to always do what is in their best interest."

Over 75% of the students hail from New Jersey; 17% from South Jersey. The class represents 12 states, with attendees from as far as California and even Canada. Notably, the majority of the class identify as female.

For Virtua's celebratory posting on LinkedIn, click [here](#). For a recording of the white coat ceremonies, click [here](#).

#### Virtua Surgeon Reaches 'Elite' Milestone for Robotic Procedures

Virtua colorectal surgeon Keith Meslin, MD, recently performed his 1,000th robotic procedure. That places him in the top 1% (or 99th percentile) nationally for the number of these advanced colorectal surgeries.

"Dr. Meslin has joined a small group of the country's most elite robotic surgeons who have achieved this milestone," said Jennifer Khelil, DO, Virtua's senior vice president and chief medical officer. "His clinical skills and expertise are among the very best in the nation."

Dr. Meslin was the first in the Philadelphia/South Jersey region to perform robotic colorectal surgery, starting in 2010. A practicing surgeon for 19 years, he is a faculty member of the Penn Medicine | Virtua Health Cancer Program and a clinical assistant professor at Rowan-Virtua School of Osteopathic Medicine.

"I'm privileged to help so many of my South Jersey neighbors with a range of colorectal conditions," said Dr. Meslin. "At Virtua, I feel fortunate to be part of a skilled and caring team that truly puts our patients first."

*U.S. News & World Report* has recognized Virtua Voorhees Hospital as a High Performing Hospital for Colon Cancer Surgery for more than five years in a row. And Virtua last year became one of just 50

providers nationally to receive the prestigious American College of Surgeons' National Accreditation for Rectal Cancer designation. Moreover, Virtua has performed more robotic surgeries than any other South Jersey provider—over 20,000 of these procedures to date.

For news coverage of Dr. Meslin's achievement, click [here](#).

## Practicing Excellence at Virtua – Clinician Feedback on Explaining Care

Thank you for your commitment to Practicing Excellence and the *Patient Experience* journey. This week, we invite you to focus on the invaluable insights provided in the [Week 22 and 23 guides](#).

Topics include *Sending Home, Supporting your Team, Explaining Care, Explaining Actions, Conveying Compassion, Finishing Strong, Knowing your Flow, and Discharge*.

As for the skill of *Explaining Care*, and relieving the fear and anxiety for a patient, Virtua Pride Primary care physician Richard Levine, MD, offered this feedback:

“I find talking about this very topic with fellow clinicians very reassuring because it matters so much. I fully understand the worries and fears a patient may have when sharing their personal well-being with me. Frankly, I would feel the same way if seeing a new clinician. It's why building that trust with them is so paramount to deliver the care needed. I take this role very seriously, and I want each patient to feel comfortable with me. What I try to do is empathize with my patient's fears, acknowledge that how they feel is valid, and remind them I am on their side. I try to end with 'this is your medical home away from home' and we have your back.”

Practicing Excellence allows you to search its library by topic. As we continue with our 26-week Patient Experience journey, you are also welcome to search for a topic that interests you— like Explaining Care— and find all related and relevant tips. We welcome your feedback as we share the Practicing Excellence journey. Email your thoughts to [VirtuaClinician@virtua.org](mailto:VirtuaClinician@virtua.org).

## Colleague Flu Vaccination Program Begins Sept. 12

Virtua has released the [flu vaccination schedule](#) for colleagues. Help protect our patients, visitors, and yourselves from the flu by getting a flu vaccination.

Flu shots are mandatory for all Virtua colleagues. Virtua will begin offering free flu shots on Sept. 12. All colleagues should receive their flu shots by 11:59 p.m. on Nov. 7.

Click to view [frequently asked questions and answers about flu vaccinations](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and share the [flyer](#) with your team members.

## Virtua in the News

## **Virtua Pulmonologist Discusses Risks of Breathing Mold Spores**

When a South Jersey police station closed due to severe mold and other unsafe conditions, NBC 10 turned to Virtua for insights on the health risks. Virtua pulmonologist Jonathan Galli, MD, discussed how spores from mold, fungi, and other airborne particles can affect people's health, and that people with lung diseases and other underlying illnesses are especially vulnerable. Effects can range from shortness of breath, wheezing, and skin irritation, to more serious conditions like sleep apnea and COPD. Watch [here](#).

## **Forbes Names Virtua a Best-in-State Employer for Fifth Consecutive Year**

Virtua has again earned national recognition as a top workplace, with its inclusion among *Forbes* magazine's "America's Best-In-State Employers for 2023."

"At Virtua, we have a caring culture that attracts people who are highly dedicated, compassionate, and truly want to do good," said Rhonda Jordan, SHRM-SCP, Virtua's EVP and chief human resources officer. "We are also committed to innovation and employee development, so people know they can continue to learn, grow, and thrive at our organization."

Virtua has made the *Forbes* list annually since its inception five years ago. Virtua also was named this year to *Modern Healthcare's* national "Best Places to Work in Healthcare" list. Moreover, the *Philadelphia Business Journal* has named Virtua a "Best Place to Work" 16 times.

Read [here](#). View the Forbes list of honorees [here](#).

## **Vote for Dennis: Modern Healthcare's Most Influential List**

Virtua is making a name for itself in this region and beyond. The latest proof: *Modern Healthcare* has named Virtua President and CEO Dennis W. Pullin as one of the 300 most influential people in health care nationwide. This honor speaks to the many ways Dennis and Virtua are leading the industry through advanced care, innovative community outreach, strategic consumer focus, and more.

This fall, *Modern Healthcare* will announce its top 100 most influential people, based partly on public voting through Tuesday, Sept. 18. If you would like to support Dennis and Virtua with your vote, and have your team do the same, please [click here](#). It's quick and easy. Thank you for your support as we elevate our organization on a national stage!

## **Case Study: Virtua Enhances Online Experience for Consumers**

More people are connecting with Virtua online and finding the information and services they want and need, according to a new report. Results include a threefold rise—to over 25 million—in online impressions; a 186% increase in clicks to Virtua's website; and a 500% jump in monthly clicks for directions to physician offices. These and other achievements are summarized in a case study by Reputation, a platform that manages consumer feedback and partners with Virtua.

For example, the partnership has helped Virtua increase the accuracy of its online listings. Virtua's marketing team now manages online reviews, which allows Virtua to connect with patients, recognize employee efforts, and address concerns promptly. And Virtua is using Reputation tools and reports to

better understand consumer behavior, in order to make data-driven decisions and prioritize what matters most to their patients.

“Everyone in the organization has embraced this consumer-first imperative,” said Ryan Younger, Virtua’s VP of marketing. “By strategizing and collaborating with Reputation,” the report concluded, “Virtua Health has [positioned] itself as a national leader in health care innovation and service delivery.” Read the case study [here](#).

## Upcoming CME Events

### Cardiology for Primary Care - Sept. 9, 2023

[Register today for the annual Virtua Cardiology for Primary Care Symposium](#), scheduled to take place on Saturday, Sept. 9. This will be the 13th year Virtua Cardiology has held this event to educate primary care practitioners, physicians, NPs, PAs, and other health professionals on news and trends in cardiovascular care. A few of this year’s topics include sleep and the heart, imaging modalities, a panel discussion on heart failure, and so much more. Check out the many excellent presentations on the agenda. [Learn more and register here](#). The program will be presented in-person on the campus of Rowan College of Burlington County, with a live-stream version available.

The symposium is part of the Rowan series, “Key Essentials for Optimizing Patient Care,” a 5Block CME Series, and is designed specifically to better prepare primary care clinicians for the management of their patients. Questions? Email [VirtuaClinician@virtua.org](mailto:VirtuaClinician@virtua.org).

### Quarterly Cardiology Grand Rounds, Sept. 20

#### Topic: CCTA in 2023 – Plaque, Physiology, and Planning PCI

Join us on Wednesday, Sept. 20, from 7 to 8 a.m. for the next session in our Quarterly Cardiology Grand Rounds series. We will be discussing coronary computed tomography angiography (CCTA), specifically “CCTA in 2023 – Plaque, Physiology, and Planning PCI.” The featured speaker will be Jonathon A. Leipsic, MD, FRCPC, FSCCT. Dr. Leipsic is head of the Department of Radiology and a professor of cardiology at the University of British Columbia. He is also a research chair in advanced cardiopulmonary imaging, and has over 530 peer-reviewed manuscripts in press or in print, over 300 scientific abstracts, and has edited two textbooks. [Click here to learn more about this session](#).

To register for the session, click [here](#).

### Register for “The Non-Hepatologist’s Guide to Caring for Patients with Liver Disease,” Sept. 30

Date: Saturday, Sept. 30, 2023

Time: 7 to 8 a.m. Registration and Breakfast

8 to 11:15 a.m. Collaborative Sessions

Location: Virtua Health Education Center, 106 Carnie Blvd, Voorhees, NJ 08043

CME: Virtua Health designates this live activity for the maximum 3.0 AMA PRA Category 1 credits™.

Caring for patients with liver disease can be very complex. Virtua Advanced Transplant and Organ Health invites all clinicians to attend “The Non-Hepatologist’s Guide to Caring for Patients with Liver Disease,” on Saturday, Sept. 30th from 7 to 11: 15 a.m.

“At Virtua, we provide comprehensive care for all types of liver disease,” said Chief of Hepatology Simona Rossi, MD. “This education session is designed to empower you to confidently evaluate and care for patients with this multifaceted disease, from the most common to the most complex.”

Learn from the experts as they speak on a variety of topics across the spectrum of liver care, including:

**Elevated Liver Enzymes: Should We Care?** Presented by Nyan L. Latt, MD, Medical Director, Hepatobiliary Tumor Program

**Assessment of Patient With Cirrhosis.** Presented by Simona Rossi, MD, Chief of Hepatology

**Where Do You Begin With Fatty Liver Disease?** Presented by Ashraf H. Malek, MD, Associate Director Hepatology

**Renal Failure, HRS or Not HRS? That Is the Question.** Presented by Hisham El Genaidi, MD, Transplant Hepatology

**Evaluation of the Incidental Liver Tumor.** Presented by Nyan L. Latt, MD

**Is This Acute Liver Failure or Is This Decompensated Liver Cirrhosis?** Presented by Simona Rossi, MD

**Alcohol-related Liver Injury.** Presented by Ashraf H. Malek, MD

**Viral Hepatitis, Take Away Points.** Presented by Hisham El Genaidi, MD

Click to [view the flyer](#) and register on our “Non-Hepatologist Guide to Caring for Patients with Liver Disease” event page [here](#).

For the day’s agenda, click [here](#). For more information, please contact Natalie Frament at [NFrument@virtua.org](mailto:NFrument@virtua.org) or 215-528-1195.

## Support Groups to Start for Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias

In what can be a resource for families of patients you may know, the Rowan-Virtua New Jersey Institute for Successful Aging, an affiliate of Virtua Medical Group, will be hosting monthly support groups for caregivers of individuals diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias. There will be one virtual group offered on the first Wednesday of each month from 3 to 4:30 p.m., and one in-person support group offered on the third Monday of each month from 9:30 to 11 a.m.

[Here is the link](#) to join (or share) the first virtual group via Zoom on Wednesday, Sept. 6 at 3 p.m.

The first *in-person* group is scheduled for Monday, Sept. 18 at 9:30 a.m. The in-person group will be held on the 3rd Floor, Room 3000 of the Rowan Medical Building, located at 42 E. Laurel Rd in Stratford.

These groups will offer a forum for caregivers to talk through challenges they are facing, seek advice and resources from their peers, and to offer one another emotional support on this caregiving journey, all in a non-judgmental space. Groups will be facilitated by a licensed clinical social worker and masters-level social work student-interns. We ask that these groups remain for the caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (other diagnoses might include vascular dementia, Lewy body dementia, frontotemporal dementia/FTD, mild cognitive impairment). Caregivers may be a spouse, an adult child, or any family member or close friend who is intimately involved in providing care for their loved one. These groups are free, and registration is not required. They are open to the community, so feel free to share with other caregivers you may know.

For more information and updates, go to [New Jersey Institute for Successful Aging](#) at Rowan-Virtua School of Osteopathic Medicine.

## Guides Needed for Musicians On Call

Would you, or someone you know, want to be a part of the healing power of music?

Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital is getting ready for the return of in-person, bedside performances by [Musicians on Call \(MOC\)](#), a nonprofit organization that has performed to more than 10,000 patients, staff and visitors at the hospital in over a dozen years of performances. While MOC has successfully lined up performers to provide the music, the program can use a fresh supply of volunteer guides.

“With in-person performances returning for the first time since the pandemic, more guides are needed to help ensure the MOC's success.” said Tiffany Lockett, director of Volunteer Services and Spiritual Care at Virtua. “They accompany the musicians to patient rooms so to help the process move most effectively, and with great reward for all.”

Volunteers are needed to escort the musicians, communicate with staff and patients, and heighten the MOC experience. They know the protocols, policies, and expectations, and are responsible for making sure these guidelines are upheld during the shift. Guides must commit to volunteering once a month for at least one year. The in-person programs are usually held once a week in the early evening.

To learn more on how to apply, visit <https://www.musiciansoncall.org/most-important-gig/>

While the in-person program is held at Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes, know that every week there is an [ongoing virtual program](#) - with offerings in Spanish - that benefits all of Virtua. Use hospital code **lourdes** to access.

## WE Support Update

Virtua's upcoming peer support network initiative, WE Support, will have trained volunteers from a variety of departments, clinical areas, and backgrounds that are available to lend an empathetic ear and provide support during difficult times. Peer supporters will come from seven career networks

throughout Virtua to best align your unique experience with someone who has empathy from having “been there.”

In 2023, we will launch WE Support for four career networks: Physician, Clinician, Nursing, and Patient Logistics. In 2024, we will launch the remaining networks: Allied Health, Support, and Professional.

For additional information, check out the [WE Support page](#) to learn more about career networks, frequently asked questions, and how to nominate yourself or a colleague to become a peer supporter.

## Colleague Gatherings in September

Virtua Health is delighted to host colleague gatherings at selected locations throughout September for colleagues to come together, interact, and enjoy a meal. We encourage you to share this wonderful news with your team members.

Note: For colleagues based in locations not listed below, you are invited to attend the gathering at the nearest campus.

### **Virtua Marlton Hospital - Wednesday, Sept. 6**

11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. to 12 a.m.

### **Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital - Thursday, Sept. 7**

11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and 11 p.m. to 1 a.m.

### **Virtua Voorhees Hospital - Thursday, Sept. 7**

11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. to 12 a.m.

### **Virtua Willingboro Hospital - Thursday, Sept. 7**

11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

### **Virtua Health & Wellness Center – Berlin - Thursday, Sept. 7**

11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., 4 to 5 p.m., and 9 to 10 p.m.

### **Virtua Mount Holly Hospital - Thursday, Sept. 14**

11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 6 to 9 p.m.

### **Virtua Health & Wellness Center – Camden - Thursday, Sept. 21**

11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and 10 p.m. to 12 a.m.

### **303/301 Lippincott Drive, Marlton - Thursday, Sept. 21**

11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

## A Healthy and Happy Back-To-School Season

Virtua collaborated with the City of Camden in a back-to-school public health fair in the Liberty Park neighborhood where children could receive a school physical and donated school supplies. Virtua teams donated 50 backpacks. VMG provided 33 physicals, while the Mobile Pediatric Unit provided 40 dental screenings, 30 fluoride varnishes, and 3 lead screenings.

Mayor Victor Carstarphen, Councilwoman Sheila Davis, and School Board President Wasim Muhammad were all in attendance to show support for the work Virtua does in the Camden community.

Additionally, VMG made a profound impact in the Pennsauken school district. Spearheaded by the VMG RISE team, the effort saw the donation of an astounding 8,380 pieces of school supplies.

In Cherry Hill, Tanikkia Jones, medical assistant from the Virtua Heart Failure Program, organized a school supply drive. She rallied the colleagues at the Virtua Health & Wellness Center – Cherry Hill to support this initiative. She personally shopped for supplies over the weekends, using the collected funds.

## IDEA – Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity for All

### **Awareness and Education**

On Monday, we celebrate Labor Day. This holiday was created through the labor movement, fighting for rights such as fair wages and recognizing the contributions of workers in the country. Click to learn more about the [history of Labor Day](#).

We also commemorate the “Great March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom,” which took place on Aug. 28, 1963. Civil rights leaders A. Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin coordinated plans for the march and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his iconic *I Have a Dream* speech. Sixty years later on Aug. 26, 2023, thousands again assembled in Washington, D.C., marching in advocacy of civil rights.

Click to learn more:

[The Historical Legacy of the March on Washington](#)

[1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom](#)

### **Opportunity to Give Back with BAACC**

September is National Sickle Cell Awareness month. According to the CDC, sickle cell disease affects about 100,000 Americans, mainly of Black or African American descent. Sickle cell patients need multiple blood transfusions every year to help treat the disease. Blood donors of Black or African American ancestry are crucial.



The Black and African American Colleague Community (BAACC) has partnered with the Red Cross to support the Virtua Blood Drive on Sept. 19, 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the First Baptist Church at 216 Sunset Road, Willingboro. If you are interested in donating blood, stop by Virtua Willingboro Hospital on Sept. 7 and Sept. 14 in front of the gift shop, and meet members of the BAACC. [Click here](#) for details.