

Clinician Update

August 8, 2024

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Virtua Gastroenterologist Urges Caution With New Blood Test for Colorectal Cancer

Last week, [the FDA approved a blood test](#) for colorectal cancer screening. The breakthrough in medical testing expands options for patients and could lead to more people getting screened. But a Virtua gastroenterologist offers words of caution. “While it’s a step toward a less invasive and more accessible option, this blood test should not replace a colonoscopy in the majority of patients,” said Charles Snyder, MD.

In studies, Guardant Health’s Shield blood test could accurately detect tumors in the colon or rectum about 83% of the time. While able to detect DNA shed by tumors during treatable stages of colorectal cancer, the Shield test was only able to detect about 13% of advanced adenomas or precancerous polyps.

“Early-stage colon cancer and precancerous polyps can only be fully detected with a colonoscopy,” said Dr. Snyder. “While this is a promising development, it’s important to remember that colonoscopy is still the gold standard with the highest accuracy rate and the ability to remove precancerous polyps.”

Since Shield could assist with increasing screening rates and early detection, patients and doctors should weigh the ease-of-use benefit compared to the decreased accuracy. An abnormal blood test will still need to be followed by a colonoscopy.

Read more news coverage [here](#) and [here](#).

Virtua Reconstructive Orthopedics Expands to South Jersey Shore Region

Continuing the expansion of our orthopedic services, Virtua recently acquired PACE Orthopedics and Sports Medicine in Somers Point. This past week, the location became [Virtua Reconstructive Orthopedics – Somers Point](#).

With this newest practice, residents of Somers Point and the surrounding areas in Atlantic and Cape May counties, as well as existing patients visiting the Jersey Shore, will have greater access to specialty and subspecialty orthopedic care.

The experienced practitioners at Virtua Reconstructive Orthopedics – Somers Point include sports medicine surgeon, Glenn Zuck, DO, sports medicine specialist Abraham Perl, MD, and physician assistant Alyssa Oravets, PA.

To refer a patient or to speak with one of the providers at Virtua Reconstructive Orthopedics – Somers Point, please contact the office at 609-927-9200.

Virtua Primary Care – Sewell Welcomes Two Physicians

Virtua Primary Care – Sewell is a growing practice with two new doctors starting August and September. Welcome, Jonathan Low, DO, and Sohil Doshi, MD.

Resource to Share With Your Patients Living With Disabilities

The New Jersey Department of Human Services has launched the [Disability Information Hub](#), a website that brings together resources from across state government. Its purpose is to be a centralized resource for New Jersey residents with disabilities and their families, caregivers, and advocates. The hub serves as a one-stop source of information that helps people with housing, health care, access to education or technology assistance, food assistance, and other services. It can be translated into numerous languages and can be accessed by blind and visually impaired individuals using screenwriter technology. It also features videos in American Sign Language for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

To learn more, [click here for the Disability Information Hub](#).

Advancing the Patient Experience

As we continue our Practicing Excellence journey, we thank you for your ongoing commitment to the Advanced Patient Experience Program. We're in Week 18 of the 26-week journey. Discover valuable insights and discussion starters in the [Week 18 Guide](#).

What Patients Are Saying About Our Clinicians

Confidence in care is a common reference among our clinician reviews. Note the following recent examples and how the patient felt about the experience, and the clinician referenced:

“He makes you feel like you are his only patient. Very attentive to your concerns and questions. Highly recommend!” (John Saia, DO)

“She has treated me like I am family, is persistent, and will find answers. She saved my life! She is the most caring physician I have ever had.” (Theresa Disandro, DO)

“I have had the best experience with her and her staff. They take the time to listen and care for you in a way that you don't always get anymore. You aren't just another patient. You are an individual who is heard and treated with the utmost respect.” (Hanane Chaibainou, APN)

“He is a stellar physician. His approach to real-world data is always balanced with a gentle humor and kindness that speaks volumes to his empathy quotient. Not once was I spoken to like a patient with a complicated chart, but rather an expecting mother engaged in her care and the well-being of her baby. When it comes to prenatal care and maternal- fetal medicine, I don’t think it is possible to have a better experience than at Virtua. I would recommend Dr. Shah and the team to any expecting parents.”
(Shailen Shah, MD)

“Our experience is always great at Rowan Pediatrics in Sewell. The office staff and providers love our children and show it from the minute we walk in. Our provider was so helpful and sweet, she listened to all of our concerns and helped us tremendously. She even called our ENT specialist to get her an appointment ASAP to check her tubes while we were in the office. We had a great visit.” (Eileen Condren, DO)

Virtua in the News

\$1.8M NIH Grant to Fund Pioneering Robotic-Surgery System

As reported in [Clinician Update on July 25](#) and now featured in [New Jersey Business Magazine](#), Rowan University researchers and Virtua orthopedic surgeons are developing the first robotic surgery system designed to align fractured long bones, such as the femur. These bones often don’t heal properly due to misalignment—causing pain, difficulty walking, and other long-term problems.

Mohammad Abedin-Nasab, PhD, and his research team have won a \$1.8 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to further develop the system and bring it to market. Christopher Haydel, MD, an orthopedic trauma surgeon at Virtua Reconstructive Orthopedics, is among those working on the project.

Dr. Abedin-Nasab is an associate professor of biomedical engineering in the Henry M. Rowan College of Engineering and the Rowan-Virtua School of Translational Biomedical Engineering & Sciences.

Virtua CEO Named a Top Business Leader

Two N.J. publications have named Virtua President and CEO Dennis W. Pullin, FACHE, to their 2024 lists of the state’s most impactful leaders.

Statewide magazine [ROI-NJ](#) placed Dennis at number 8 on its “Top 30 Influencers: People of Color” list. And [South Jersey Biz](#) recognized Dennis among its “Power 50.” Both lists also include Dr. Ali Houshmand, president of Rowan University.

In *ROI-NJ*, Dennis is credited with improving the quality of health care, addressing inequities, increasing access, and leading research. “These are just some of the reasons why Virtua is a

model in health care, not just for South Jersey, but around the state and across the country,” the magazine stated.

Virtua Improving Engagement and Patient Experience

In collaboration with Practicing Excellence, Shannon Stillwell, VP and chief nursing officer of Virtua Mount Holly and Virtua Willingboro, contributed the article, “Human Development via Microlearning to Improve Nurse Engagement and Patient Experience” to *Nurse Leader*, the official journal of the American Organization for Nursing Leadership.

The [article](#) provides an in-depth view of Virtua’s partnering with Practicing Excellence to implement an initiative that has significantly improved engagement and patient experience scores through organization-wide skill building and a renewed focus on employee well-being and patient connection.

Collaboration with Free Clinic Boosts Access to Care

Since its 2019 launch, Virtua’s partnership with Cherry Hill Free Clinic has enabled 10,000 uninsured/underinsured area residents to receive free primary care, according to a philanthropy blog.

"This initiative not only alleviates the burden on emergency departments, but also fosters a healthier, more resilient community," the post noted.

The partnership features "a robust support system that includes clinical leadership on the CHFC board, technology assistance, and significant community benefit investments for laboratory services," the blog reported.

The Virtua/CHFC relationship is highlighted as an example of a successful community health partnership in [The Engage Blog](#).

Beyond the Bedside: Ada Ortiz's Journey of Healing and Hope

Providing care and comfort during the most challenging times is what makes our colleagues truly Here for Good.

In this episode of "Here for Good: Inside Edition," join President and CEO Dennis Pullin as he sits down with Ada Ortiz, a devoted patient representative at Virtua for over 12 years. Ada's journey is a testament to dedication, from providing comfort to families in their darkest hours to authoring children's books that impart valuable life lessons.

Discover the inspiring story of Ada’s commitment to making a difference in health care and beyond. Click to [view the video](#).

Mark Your Calendars: 14th Annual Cardiology for Primary Care Symposium, Sept. 7

Join us for this year's Cardiology for Primary Care, the first in the Key Essentials for Optimizing Patient Care five-block CME series presented by the Rowan-Virtua College of Osteopathic Medicine and offering up to 5 AOA CATEGORY 1-A / 5 AMA PRA Category 1 credits™.

The event will take place virtually on **Saturday, September 7, 2024, 7:30 a.m. to 1p.m.**

This year's agenda includes the following topics and speakers:

- **Prescribe with Precision: Better Cardiovascular Outcomes Using the Updated BEERS Criteria** - Kevin Overbeck, DO
- **Lipids: An Overview and Update on Diagnosis and Management** - Tania Maheshwari, DO
- **Aortic Stenosis** - Teresa Sousa, MSN, FNP-BC
- **Diagnosis and Management of Hypertension** - Christopher Mercogliano, DO
- **Innovations & Guidelines on Hypertension** - Kintur Sanghvi, MD
- **EKG Lecture for Primary Care** - Ramneet Wadehra, DO
- **Immunotherapy Adverse Events & Management** - Shayma Kazmi, MD
- **PE Management and PERT Team in 2024** - Luai Tabaza, MD
- **Current State of Coronary Artery Calcium Scoring (CACS) and Coronary Computed Tomography Angiography (CCTA)** - Michael Gannon, MD

The registration fee for the individual Cardiology for Primary Care program is \$149. To register for this event, or for the full series, visit: go.rowan.edu/cme. Go [here to review the full brochure and for more details](#).

For questions about the series, email at cme@rowan.edu.

Save the Dates: Colleague Appreciation Gatherings in September

This year's [Colleague Culture Pulse Survey](#) theme is *WE Respect Everybody, Always*. As a token of our respect and appreciation, Virtua Health is honored to host Colleague Appreciation Gatherings at selected locations throughout September. This is a wonderful opportunity for colleagues to come together, connect, and enjoy a complimentary meal. Please find the schedule below and be sure to save the dates in your calendars. For colleagues based in locations not listed below, you are invited to attend the gathering at the nearest campus.

Virtua Mount Holly Hospital

Wednesday, Sept. 4

11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

10 p.m. to 12 a.m.

Virtua Voorhees Hospital

Thursday, Sept. 5

11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

10 p.m. to 12 a.m.

Virtua Willingboro Hospital

Thursday, Sept. 5

11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

10 p.m. to 12 a.m.

Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital

Tuesday, Sept. 10

11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

10 p.m. to 12 a.m.

Virtua Marlton Hospital

Wednesday, Sept. 11

11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

10 p.m. to 12 a.m.

Virtua Health & Wellness Center – Camden

Thursday, Sept. 12

6 a.m. to 7 a.m.

11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Virtua Health & Wellness Center – Berlin

Wednesday, Sept. 18

11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

IDEA – Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity for All

Today, **Aug. 8** is [International Allyship Day](#). Created in 2023, the focus of this observance is to embrace diversity, celebrate differences, and help others genuinely feel like they belong. In Virtua’s efforts to continue fostering inclusion, diversity, and equity through our Culture of WE, colleagues can access valuable resources, including Colleague Communities, training, and educational materials on the [IDEA](#) page of Colleague Corner. Additionally, Practicing Excellence offers tips on respect and other important topics.

[Minority Donor Awareness Month Event](#)

Thursday, Aug. 15, 5 to 7 p.m.

Barry D. Brown Health Education Center

Join our colleague communities for an event organized by the **VirtuAsia** colleague community, in collaboration with other colleague communities in recognition of National Minority Donor Awareness Month and organ donation. Click to [view the flyer](#).