

Clinician Update

Dec. 17, 2020

TOMORROW NIGHT! COVID-19 Vaccination Webinar Part 2 – Distribution Plans

Please join us **TOMORROW night, Friday Dec. 18 at 7 p.m.** as Virtua’s clinical leaders share the latest news and plans regarding the COVID-19 vaccine. All VMG, members of Virtua’s Clinically Integrated Networks, and Virtua medical staff are invited to attend.

Apologies for the late notice and the unusual time and day. The situation has remained fluid throughout the week as we anticipated vaccine shipments—which have now arrived! If you are unable to attend, we are recording the session and will make it available by the next morning.

You are invited to a Zoom webinar.

When: Dec. 18, 2020 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Topic: Vaccine Webinar

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://zoom.us/j/92984335287?pwd=N29lMlY0bnd3Rmg1UU05YmhHNDZFZQT09>

Passcode: 674115

Or iPhone one-tap:

US: +13017158592,,92984335287#,,,,,0#,,674115# or
+13126266799,,92984335287#,,,,,0#,,674115#

Or Telephone:

Dial(for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

US: +1 301 715 8592 or +1 312 626 6799 or +1 929 205 6099 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 346 248
7799 or +1 669 900 6833

Webinar ID: 929 8433 5287

Passcode: 674115

International numbers available: <https://zoom.us/u/aynLLPxR>

In Case You Missed It, Latest Vaccine News

Last night, we shared this [video](#) from Virtua’s chief clinical officer, Dr. Reg Blaber, to learn more about vaccination distribution to all colleagues, medical staff, and affiliated clinicians. He encourages you to continue to stay informed and stay tuned as vaccination information continues to evolve. Our next update will be tomorrow night during the webinar reference above.

FDA Vaccine Approval Process and CDC Guidance

A Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advisory panel is scheduled to vote today on whether to recommend approval of [Moderna’s Covid-19](#) vaccine for emergency use. This step normally paves the way to full FDA approval and would allow distribution of a second preventive treatment for COVID-19. This process follows a similar one last week when on **Dec. 11**, the FDA granted emergency use authorization for the COVID-19 vaccine manufactured by Pfizer/BioNTech.

While the vaccine is not mandatory, we encourage all Virtua colleagues to stay informed about the vaccine. We have posted a set of [Frequently Asked Questions](#) to Digital 411, and are sharing below a set of materials from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention regarding vaccine safety:

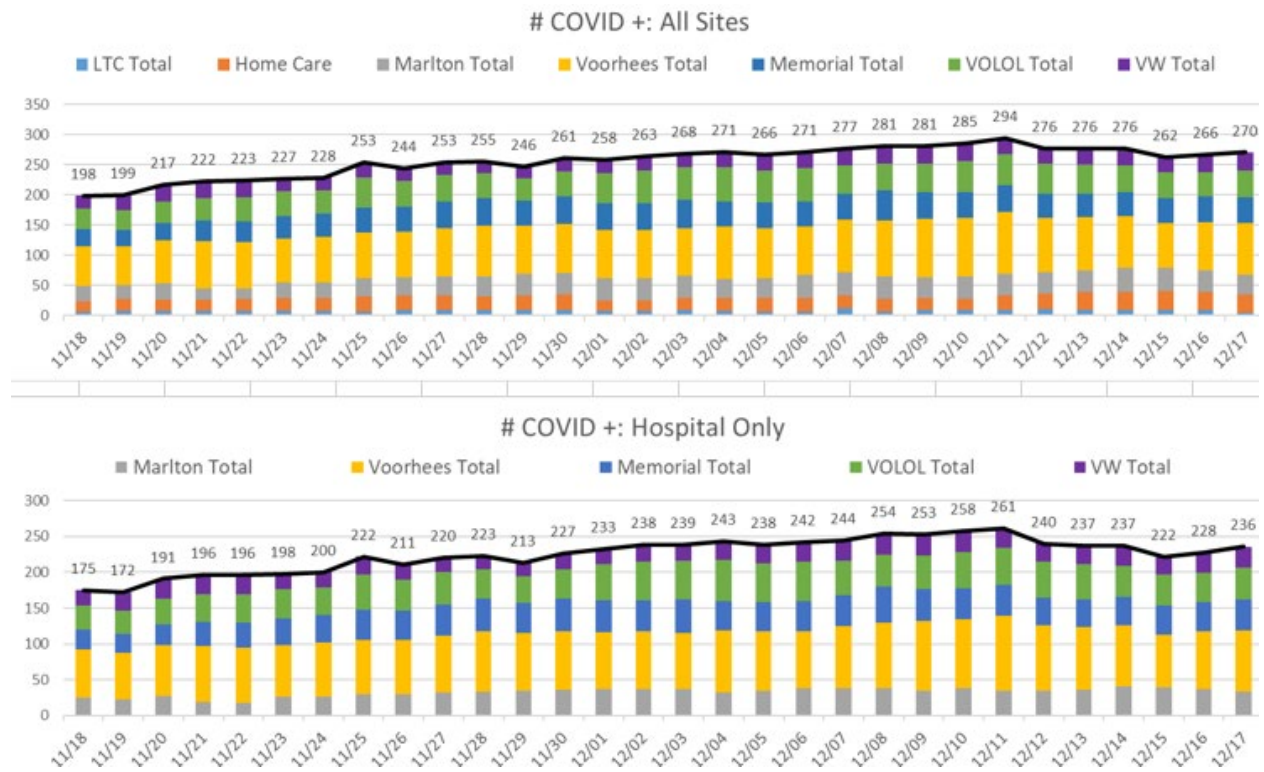
- [Benefits of Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine](#)
- [8 Things to Know about Vaccine Planning](#)
- [Understanding How COVID-19 Vaccines Work](#)

Each of the above items is available in a print-friendly format and in five different languages, including Spanish. To change the language, click the tab toward the top of each webpage.

COVID-19 vaccines are the focus of headlines and conversations across the world. As information and misinformation are both readily available, it is important to share vaccine safety information from trusted, verified resources.

By the Numbers

The following charts reflect the latest figures for Virtua-site cases of COVID-19.



Fast Facts

- The rate of transmission in New Jersey is currently at 1.05
- Locally, in the tri-county area, there have been a total of 1,561 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 111 fatalities.
- The total number of cases are as follows:
 - Burlington County 17,812
 - Camden County 24,872
 - Gloucester County 12,052

Virtua Offers New Monoclonal Antibody Treatment for COVID-19

Virtua is now providing monoclonal antibody treatment for patients diagnosed with COVID-19. The medication, called bamlanivimab, helps non-hospitalized, high-risk patients with mild-to-moderate COVID-19. “We’re very proud to be among the first in our region to offer this exciting new therapy,” says Dr. Sam Weiner, Virtua medical director of primary care, urgent care, and occupational health. “Early studies had suggested that bamlanivimab may resolve symptoms more quickly and possibly reduce progression of disease and associated hospitalizations. Further studies are ongoing with respect to the use of this medicine and its effectiveness.”

Dr. Weiner provided the following details about the initiative:

- Monoclonal antibodies are lab-made proteins that mimic the immune system’s response. Bamlanivimab is specifically designed to block the new coronavirus’ entry into human cells.
- It is necessary to treat those early in their infection with this medication—within two to three days of developing symptoms—for it to have its greatest impact and effectiveness.
- Bamlanivimab is administered by IV infusion on an emergency basis at three Virtua hospitals: Willingboro, Voorhees, and Our Lady of Lourdes in Camden. It is offered at Virtua Willingboro’s outpatient infusion center for patients who are identified through the Access Center and primary care and specialist networks. It is administered in the emergency departments at Virtua Voorhees and Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes for eligible outpatient visits. We have also administered bamlanivimab to colleagues who fit the required categories.
- Bamlanivimab has emergency use authorization by the FDA. As such, it restricts who may receive it. The New Jersey Department of Health provided doses to Virtua, and we’ve been infusing patients for about two weeks.
- Those eligible for bamlanivimab include people who are not hospitalized and have mild-to-moderate COVID-19, plus one or more risk factors, such as BMI of 35 or higher, chronic kidney disease, diabetes, immunosuppressive disease or receiving immunosuppressive treatment, age 65 or older, or age 55 or older with certain chronic conditions.

Dr. Weiner credits two colleagues who’ve led the clinical direction for this initiative: Dr. Martin Topiel, Virtua’s head of infectious diseases, and Dodi Iannaco, Virtua’s lead nurse practitioner for urgent care. Says Iannaco, “This is yet another way that Virtua is providing the latest advances for our patients.”

Urgent Care Telehealth Option Available

Virtua Urgent Care offers high-quality [telehealth visits](#), so patients can get the care they need from the comfort of their own home seven days a week, 365 days a year, including weekends and holidays. Urgent Care Telehealth providers can address a variety of conditions including coronavirus consults, seasonal allergies, cold symptoms, eye problems, flu-like symptoms, minor musculoskeletal injuries, sinus infections, skin conditions, upset stomach, headaches and urinary tract infections. In-person [urgent care](#) services are also available at convenient locations throughout South Jersey and are also open 7 days a week, 365 days a year, including weekends and holidays.

Save the Date



We invite all Virtua colleagues to tune in and experience inspiring musical performances to “Lift Us Up” in the Here for Good Holiday Concert live via Zoom on **Tuesday, Dec. 22 at 7 p.m.** Please watch for the exclusive link in your Virtua email inbox closer to the date. Happy holidays from your friends at Virtua.

Season’s Greetings from a Grateful Community

Each day, our Virtua colleagues throughout the organization stand up against this pandemic and work tirelessly to care for our patients and this community. As a thank you for all that you do, patients and their families have sent heartfelt messages of appreciation and best wishes.

The Fei family expresses, “Thank you so much Virtua Health staff. We are so thankful for everything that you have done for us. We are happy to have our dad back, healthy and on his feet, and he is more than happy to have his voice back to sing now. Happy Holidays!”

Click [here](#) to view this video compilation of more greetings from patients and their families.