

Clinician Update

December 19, 2024

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Virtua First in Region to Provide ‘Game-Changer’ for IBD

The Virtua Crohn’s & Colitis Center is now offering intestinal ultrasound, providing patients with accurate, noninvasive diagnostic imaging of their intestines—streamlining and improving their care.

“This is a real game-changer for people with IBD,” said gastroenterologist Sanket Patel, DO, medical director of the Virtua Crohn’s & Colitis Center. “It has many advantages over conventional imaging techniques, such as time-consuming and resource-intensive MRI and CT, and more invasive tests like colonoscopy.”

Dr. Patel, who is fellowship-trained in IBD, recently completed extensive training and is certified by the International Bowel Ultrasound Group. Virtua is the first provider in New Jersey and the Greater Philadelphia region to offer this level of expertise and technology.

“I can perform IUS right in the office, see exactly what’s going on in the patient’s intestines, and show it to them while I’m conducting the scan,” said Dr. Patel. “We can make care decisions immediately.”

For news coverage, watch on [CBS 3](#).

Safety Update: Strongline Launches at Virtua Willingboro

Strongline, a safety and security technology, launched at Virtua Willingboro today. The Strongline Staff Safety System provides colleagues in select roles with special badges that can be worn alongside their Virtua-issued ID badge. Should the wearer feel unsafe for any reason, they can double-press the badge to send an alert to in-house security staff and other colleagues in the vicinity. The alert will inform authorized staff of who is in duress and their exact, real-time location.

The goal is to prevent and de-escalate incidents of (verbal or physical) threats and harm by providing colleagues with an instantaneous and discreet way of requesting assistance.

Strongline was first launched at Virtua Mount Holly’s emergency department, pediatric emergency department, and behavioral health unit. It will expand to additional Virtua campuses in 2025.

HIPAA Changes for Reproductive Health Impacting Medical Record Releases

On Monday, Dec. 23, 2024, changes to the Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPAA) go into effect, providing additional privacy protections to reproductive health care information.

Generally, HIPAA will now prohibit the disclosure of a patient's protected health information (PHI) related to reproductive health care if:

- The care was legal where and under the circumstances it was provided
- The PHI is requested for the purpose of investigating, prosecuting, or suing the person who sought the reproductive health care (or identifying a person for these purposes)

As part of this, the new regulations generally require Virtua Health to obtain an attestation from a requestor before using or sharing PHI potentially related to reproductive health care for the following HIPAA purposes:

- Health oversight activities
- Judicial and administrative proceedings
- Law enforcement purposes
- Identifying a deceased person, determining a cause of death, or other duties of a coroner/medical examiner authorized by law

These changes will impact medical record releases. Virtua Health's Privacy Office has put together a [Reproductive Health Care Policy](#), an [attestation](#), and some additional tools to assist with understanding and addressing these changes. The Privacy Office is also happy to provide additional education or training. For more information, please email: privacyofficer@virtua.org.

Important Apple Device Security Update Is Available Now

Keeping your software updated is essential for maintaining the security, performance, and compatibility of your devices. Virtua Information Technology requires everyone using an Apple device, whether personal or Virtua-issued, to apply the latest update released from Apple to patch a critical vulnerability. Please refer to [Apple security releases - Apple Support](#) to see the Apple devices and their latest software version. If your device software version is **earlier** the version shown, then **YOUR DEVICE IS AT RISK FOR COMPROMISE**.

Reminder: Virtua's Password Policy for Multifactor Authenticator

Virtua has seen a large increase in attempts to gain access to our network and applications. The request typically starts by informing the Customer Support staff that they just bought a new telephone and/or changed their number and need help getting back online. If the imposters can get the password reset and the Microsoft Authenticator changed to their telephone, then they can gain access to Virtua's systems and data.

Due to this, if an Authenticator reset to a new telephone/number request is involved, **Virtua's IT Service Desk will set up a Microsoft Teams meeting or an in-person meeting at 301 Lippincott, where identification can be positively made**. When calling the IT Service Desk (856-355-1234), the requester will now need to provide a valid photo identification, such as a license or passport, and answer specific questions to verify their identity.

Self-Service Password Resets and Unlocks with Microsoft Authenticator

Microsoft self-service password reset replaced Password Station for colleagues enrolled in Microsoft Authenticator. You can reset their expired/forgotten passwords or unlock your account without contacting the Service Desk:

- Visit passwordreset.microsoftonline.com, enter your Virtua email address, and complete the verification prompts on the Microsoft Authenticator application
- Visit the Self-Service Password Reset in the Information Technology tab of the Colleague Corner

Click to view the [complete article on the Colleague Corner](#).

Clinician Feedback Sought for Improving Social Determinants of Health

The South Jersey Health Collaborative, of which Virtua is a member, is asking for your feedback in this 10-15 minute [Key Stakeholder Survey](#). The goal is to learn more about strengths, barriers, and opportunities for improving health and social determinants of health across South Jersey. Your responses will help the collaborative identify resources, strengths, and opportunities for collaboration and collective action. All responses are anonymous.

The data collected will be an important component of the collaborative's Community Health Needs Assessment. All the data gathered from this survey and other methods will be available for free on the websites of each member in 2025. **The survey will be open for participation through Jan. 17, 2025.**

Click [here](#) for the survey and thank you for your time and participation.

Delivering the Healing Power of Music Over the Holidays

The annual Hope for the Holidays Virtual Concert presented by Musicians on Call (MOC) is [now available](#) exclusively for patients, families, and caregivers in need of some extra holiday cheer. This festive virtual concert is filled with performances of holiday favorites and warm greetings from Brenda Lee, Dolly Parton, Better Than Ezra, Mickey Guyton, Alicia Witt, and more.

[MOC](#) is a nonprofit organization that over the past dozen years has held more than 10,000 live, bedside performances for patients, staff, and visitors at Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital.

The program is available for all Virtua patients and caregivers, **through Friday, Jan. 3 at 11:59 pm**. Click [here](#) and use hospital code **lourdes** to access. [Click here for a printable flyer](#) to share on bulletin boards.

Also, feel free year-round to access MOC virtual programming, including Spanish-language options, through [Virtua's MOC dashboard](#). Want to know more? Email VirtuaClinician@virtua.org.

More of Virtua in the News

Virtua Cardiologist on How Lifestyle Changes Can Address Chronic Diseases

Virtua cardiologist Vasu Palli, DO, was interviewed for a story about the high rates of heart disease and other chronic illnesses in New Jersey and beyond. Quitting smoking is “the biggest reversible single modifier” for coronary artery disease, Dr. Palli explained. “Insufficient sleep and sedentary lifestyle [are] becoming more and more of an issue as people work multiple jobs. Everyone’s running around trying to get ‘this and that’ done for deadlines.”

Read in [New Jersey Business Magazine](#).

Corporate Partners Fund Eat Well and EMT Training

Virtua was recently awarded two grants to help us make a positive impact on our community:

The PSEG Foundation awarded \$10,000 to support Virtua’s Eat Well food access programs. This funding will fuel the work that our Eat Well teams are doing each day to increase food access and reduce chronic disease for our neighbors. The Eat Well Mobile Grocery Store, Mobile Farmers Market, and Food Farmacy locations in Camden and Mount Holly have served as a valuable food resource for our patients and community since 2017.

The Best Buy Foundation granted \$20,000 for technology support for Virtua’s EMT Training Program. This gift will provide technology dedicated to student use, expanding our digital learning platform through interactive eLearning modules, study materials, immersive simulations, and other tools critical to professional growth in emergency medical services. Learn more about the many Virtua programs and services that are fueled by philanthropy at [GiveToVirtua.org](#).

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:

“Really enjoy going to this office and dealing with the staff. Dr. Paluzzi is very thorough in his exam and takes the time to listen to what you have to say.” **(Richard Paluzzi, MD)**

“The doctor was very knowledgeable. She took her time with me and answered my questions with concern. Thank you, Dr. Mathews!” **(Rinsa Mathews, DPM)**

“He treated me like a person, not just another patient. He was pleasant and kind and very helpful.” **(Nasser Chaudhry, MD)**

“Very professional and caring. She spent quite a bit of time with me, and for that I am very appreciative.” **(Dana Gramatges, PA)**

“I absolutely love and trust her. I have been seeing her for several years now. Staff at the office is always welcoming, helpful, and friendly.” **(Diane Hargis-Reynolds, CNM)**

LAST CALL: Voting Deadline for 2025 Top Docs for Kids, Dec. 30

SJ Mag Media is surveying South Jersey doctors to nominate colleagues for their Top Docs for Kids issue. There are many colleagues amongst us who are exemplars in pediatric medicine, and this is an opportunity to give them some recognition.

Please find ballot link here: [2025 Top Docs for Kids Ballot](#)

Director of Clinical Triage Selects Practicing Excellence Tip on Cheerfulness

This week's "Best of the Best" Practicing Excellence tip focuses on having a positive mindset and how it helps patients and fellow colleagues feel safe and relaxed. Click to play the tip: [Connecting as a Team Tip #4: Cheerfulness.](#)

April Rucci, director of clinical triage, says:

"To conclude the 'Best of the Best' series for 2024, I've selected a tip that feels especially relevant during the holiday season. This tip reinforces the ripple effect of small, meaningful actions and the fact that seeing good deeds makes us more likely to perform good deeds ourselves. I know this is true from personal experience. Have you ever held a door open for someone and shared a smile—and then watched as they did the same for the next person? I think there's something beautiful in those small moments."

Upcoming Events

Respect + Allyship = Belonging with Dr. Randal Pinkett

Jan. 16, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Virtua Barry D. Brown Health Education Center, Voorhees

Brought to you by Virtua's Colleague Communities, this insightful session will focus on how respect and allyship are essential to building a strong sense of belonging while strengthening our Culture of WE. Guest speaker Dr. Randal Pinkett, chairman and CEO of [BCT Partners](#) and a renowned diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) thought leader, will explore data-driven insights and practical strategies to cultivate respect through trust and understanding, actively champion others through allyship, and create an inclusive environment where everyone truly belongs—and we are Here for Good. [Click here for more information.](#) Click [here to register for the event.](#)

CME: Liver Disease and Transplantation, Jan. 28

The Rowan-Virtua School of Osteopathic Medicine will host a CME session entitled "[Liver Disease and Transplantation](#)" on **Tuesday, Jan. 28, from 12:30 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.** in the Physician Conference Room at Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital. The live activity is designated for *3.75 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™*. The speakers include Simona Rossi, MD; Ashraf Malek, MD; and Ely Sebastian, MD.

The target audience for this activity is physicians, physician assistants, advanced nurse practitioners, medical residents, medical fellows, and nurses.

To register, go to The Virtua Learning System (VLS) and search "Liver Disease and Transplantation." For more information, click [here](#).

Meet Virtua's Power Couple, Jeff and Anna Porch

For the record, Anna Porch, manager of rehab services, and Jeff Porch, manager of respiratory, are in a league of their own. In this special episode of "Here for Good: Inside Edition," Dennis Pullin chats with the podcast's first-ever couple! Discover how their shared passions—both at Virtua and on the softball field—make Anna and Jeff the ultimate team! Click [here](#).

IDEA – Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity for All

Heading into the end of the year, we highlight several holiday observances: [Winter Solstice or Yule](#) on **Dec. 21**, [Hanukkah](#) from sundown **Dec. 25 to Jan. 2**, [Christmas](#) on **Dec. 25**, and [Kwanzaa](#) from **Dec. 26 to Jan. 1**. Widely celebrated, each of these holds religious, spiritual, or cultural meaning to many around the globe.

Have a Happy and Restful Holiday Season

As clinicians, you know all too well the needs of our community never take a holiday. You are all selfless professionals and irreplaceable. You serve on the frontlines each day, and that includes holidays. Our hope is that you will still find time to celebrate with loved ones.

Because of the upcoming holiday week, there will not be an issue of *Clinician Update* next Thursday, Dec. 26. The editors wish you a safe, healthy holiday. We hope you get to have some needed time off to refresh. We will see you again at the start of the new year with a special edition of *Clinician Update* devoted to medical education here at Virtua.

All our best wishes for a safe and peaceful 2025.