

Clinician Update

February 16, 2023

Virtua Joins American Heart Association's Heart Failure Initiative

Approximately 6 million Americans live with heart failure—a number expected to reach greater proportions as the population ages. To tackle this growing problem, Virtua Health has joined more than two dozen health care systems across the country to participate in the American Heart Association's IMPLEMENT-HF™, which works to create a health care ecosystem for heart failure that emphasizes implementation science and patient engagement.

“At Virtua, we work to manage the heart failure in our patients—from diagnosis and treatment to cardiac rehab and personalized home care programs,” said Tolulope Agunbiade, MD, medical director of Advanced Heart Failure, which includes Virtua's [five outpatient heart failure centers](#) in Cherry Hill, Woodbury, Sewell, Willingboro, and Moorestown. “Our program is recognized by the American Heart Association for outstanding care, and this new initiative will help us continue to raise the bar.”

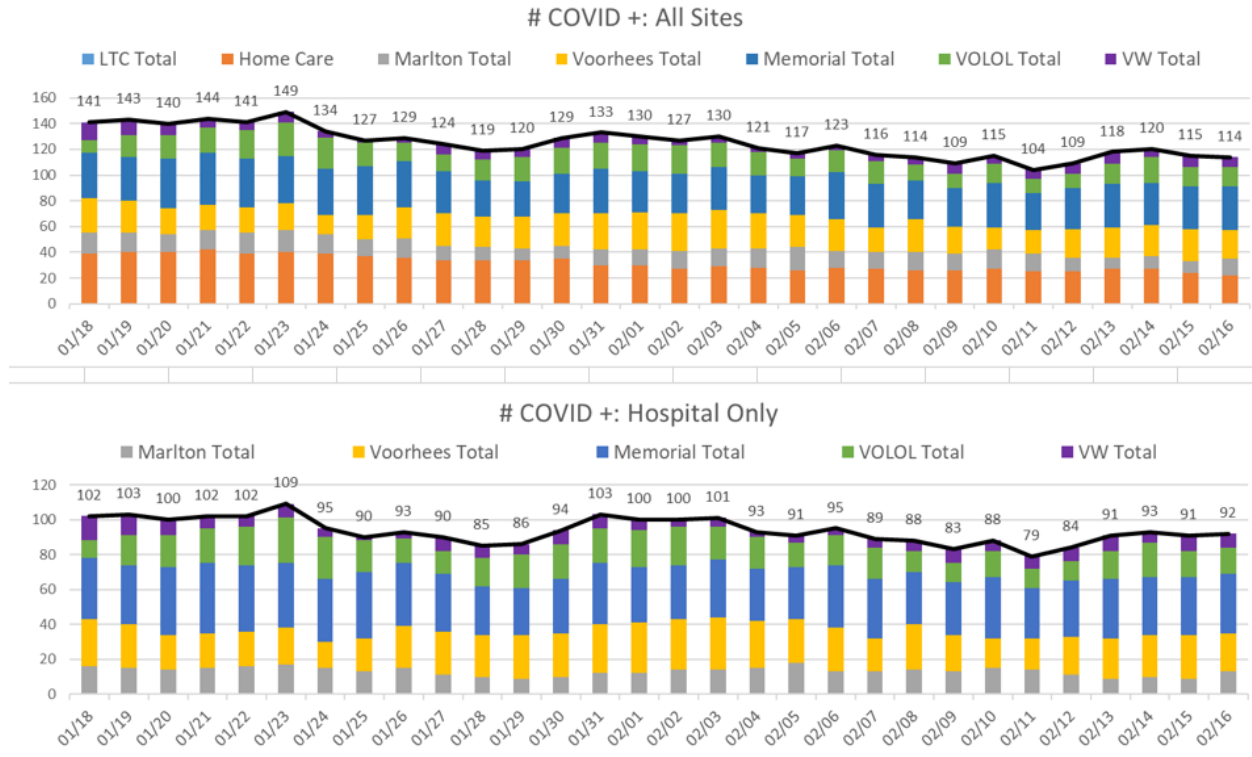
“The goal is to bridge communication and coordination between care settings, health care professionals, and patients,” said Theresa Rowe, director of Heart Failure Services, “so to achieve precise heart failure management and improve outcomes.”

To learn more, click [here](#) and [here](#).

Virtua Cardiologist Addresses Health Equity in Stroke Treatment

In related news, the American Heart Association interviewed Troy Randle, DO, Virtua cardiologist, as part of its International Stroke Conference newsletter. In [this short video](#), he responds to a recent study on disparities in treatment offerings and outcomes for Black and Hispanic people who experience a stroke. Dr. Randle suffered a stroke after contracting COVID-19, which has helped him to relate to his patients on a deeper level. He specifically addresses the mental health issues that Black and Hispanic stroke survivors often experience, and how providers can help advance equitable care.

COVID-19 Census



Latest COVID-19 Fast Facts

- The rate of transmission in New Jersey was reported on Wednesday as .95.
- The total number of cases reported as of 3 p.m. yesterday:
 - Atlantic County 70,583
 - Burlington County: 113,943 cases
 - Camden County: 137,678 cases
 - Gloucester County: 69,723 cases
- COVID-associated mortality for Camden, Burlington, Gloucester, and Atlantic counties: 5,098.
- The state’s Vaccination Overview dashboard reported 20,190,649 doses of vaccine have been administered.

Mpox Stats

As of the last posting, the number of probable and confirmed cases of mpox cases in New Jersey: **764**.

An Epic Year for MyChart

To wrap up another year of productive partnership, our friends at Epic generated a video that recaps some significant statistics of 2022. For instance, 249,000 appointments were scheduled in MyChart last year, and 131,000 potential adverse drug events were avoided thanks to medication administration safety checks. The video demonstrates the important impact EMRs provide to support us on the journey to high-reliability and to enhance our patient experience.

Click to learn more in [this video](#).

Virtua Orthopedic Surgeon Co-Authors Article on Optimizing Shoulder Procedures

In shoulder arthroplasty, the use of effective methods to reduce infection and blood loss is just as important as surgical technique. Open shoulder procedures, including total and reverse total shoulder arthroplasty, in the outpatient setting offer tremendous benefit to patients. However, they may pose an increased risk of bleeding and infection. These complications can be devastating to a patient. As such, surgeons are continually seeking to minimize those potential complications, especially with high-risk patients.

Sean McMillan, DO, FAOAO, sports medicine surgeon at Virtua Orthopedics & Spine, chief of orthopedics at Virtua Willingboro and Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes hospitals and colleagues recently co-authored an article published by the *Journal of Orthopaedic Experience & Innovation* on novel intra-operative blood loss management and sterilization techniques that have the potential to further minimize unwanted outcomes. [Click to read it here.](#)

Virtua Physicians Celebrate Vivien Thomas, LL.D., Black Pioneer of Cardiovascular Surgery

With February as Black History Month and American Heart Month, it calls to mind a health care hero of the 1940s who aspired to be a doctor but never made it to medical school due to financial hardship. He was classified and paid as a janitor due to his race. But this grandson of a slave would go on to be famous for his contributions to heart surgery.

Through his skills, Vivien Thomas was instrumental in developing a surgical procedure to treat Blue Baby Syndrome, a cardiovascular condition that was at the time considered fatal and untreatable. Thomas developed a surgical solution and was part of the team for what was widely considered at the time as the first open-heart surgery.

“Vivien Thomas served as a pillar of modern day cardiac surgery by helping to establish the Johns Hopkins Hospital, where he eventually became recognized as faculty, into a pioneering institution,” said Chun (Dan) Choi, MD, vice president of clinical operations for the cardiovascular service line at Virtua. “Many surgeons to this day are a testament to his undefeatable dedication to research. It is good for us to celebrate his legacy by remembering. And, even more so, by doubling down on our commitment to similarly serve.”

In 1976, Johns Hopkins University presented Thomas with an honorary doctorate, which allowed the staff and students of Johns Hopkins University to call him doctor. He mentored many physicians, including Hopkins’ first black cardiac resident, Dr. Levi Watkins, Jr., whom Thomas assisted with his groundbreaking work in the use of the automatic implantable defibrillator.

“We celebrate his example,” said Donee Thomas-Patterson, MD, Virtua family medicine physician. “And follow that example, not just for today, or this month, but daily because of the people like him who inspire us. We celebrate all those who have paved the path for African Americans to be seen as equals and free to be leaders, innovators, and trend setters.”

The Virtua Health Black & African American Colleague Community (BAACC) promotes an environment of awareness, education, mentorship, inclusion, and respect throughout our Virtua community and beyond.

The BAACC is hosting its first social event of 2023 at Wilson's Restaurant in Hi-Nella next Wednesday, **Feb. 22 at 5 p.m.** Please join us for the opportunity to connect with colleagues from across the organization, with good food, conversation and networking. If you would like to learn more about the BAACC, please email BAACC@virtua.org.

In the News

Mary Campagnolo, MD, Virtua family physician and geriatrician, medical director for value-based programs and payer contracts for Virtua Medical Group, and a member of the board of directors for American Academy of Family Physicians, was featured in *Consumer Reports* in an article entitled [The Right Way to Recover from a Fall](#). She also discussed gun safety in a [podcast interview](#) for Uniformed Services Medical School.

The Journey to Thriving Event: Creating Space to Discuss Clinician Burnout Tuesday, Feb. 28 at 6 p.m.

As we continue to prioritize the well-being of our colleagues, Virtua will host a virtual event focused on clinician burnout. During this one-hour virtual event, Dr. Andy Cohen, vice president of clinical operations and medical director, will share his story from the day his unrecognized burnout came to a head, what he learned from that experience, and the adjustments he has made.

Nate Terrell, licensed professional counselor and Carebridge consultant, will address the concepts of burnout, compassion fatigue, and the stress responses they can produce.

Click to register on the [Virtua Learning System](#). The event will be held using the Carebridge Zoom platform, which will allow for anonymous attendance and participation in the question and answer segment.

WE Applaud Dr. Matthew Puc for Continuous Learning & Innovation

We often highlight posts that showcase our colleagues demonstrating our Culture of WE—in this case, the Guiding Principal of Continuous Learning & Innovation in which WE challenge the status quo, WE see best practices, and WE act with a growth mindset.

Dr. David Temmermand, otolaryngologist, recently recognized Dr. Matthew Puc, thoracic surgeon and program director of the Penn Medicine | Virtua Health Cancer Program, for his professionalism and readiness.

Dr. Temmermand said, "I am more impressed with his surgical skills each time. I'd even venture to say that he has a unique skill set not seen elsewhere in the tristate region. When I came across a challenging case a few months ago, I knew exactly who to call for help.

"I had a patient with such severe kyphosis that prevented a traditional transcervical approach to removing a parathyroid adenoma. On the day of surgery, I watched Dr. Puc approach the central neck via the thorax with exquisite care and gentle handling. His technique in this complex approach further proved to me that I had found an exceptional colleague. He was careful, confident and very competent."

Dr. Temmermand went on to describe another case that highlighted Dr. Puc's skill, this time involving a patient with an exceptionally large goiter. "The patient had seen numerous surgeons. All of them assured him the only way he could proceed was with a sternotomy. When the patient asked me if I could do it any other way, I knew the only option was if I had a great thoracic surgeon to help. Dr. Puc made this very complex case appear easy. He's very skilled, caring, and compassionate."

Thank you, Drs. Puc and Temmermand, for elevating our Culture of WE and all that you do for our patients.