

## Clinician Update

### January 11, 2024

With your busy schedules in mind, we are experimenting with a way to expedite the delivery of this important clinician messaging to you. If you are interested in an abbreviated audio version of *Clinician Update*, [click here](#).

## Virtua Health First in State to Offer “Game-Changing” Treatment for Hypertension

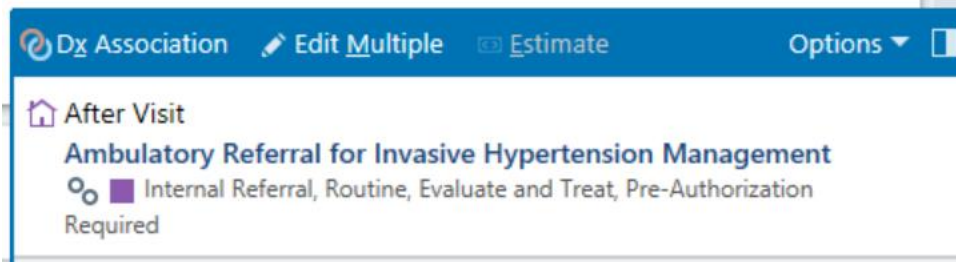
Virtua Mount Holly Hospital this week became the first hospital in New Jersey to perform an innovative new procedure designed to help people with uncontrolled high blood pressure. Recently approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the [Medtronic Symplicity Spyral™ renal denervation system](#) uses radiofrequency energy to treat overactive nerves on the outer surface of the kidney arteries. This minimally invasive procedure is clinically proven to help reduce high blood pressure and offers new hope to individuals whose previous efforts with medication and lifestyle changes did not have the desired result.

“Many consider this the first significant innovation for treating high blood pressure in nearly 30 years,” said Virtua interventional cardiologist and Chief of Cardiovascular Interventions Kintur Sanghvi, MD, FACC, FSCAI, who performed the health system’s first Symplicity procedure on January 9. Throughout his career, Dr. Sanghvi participated as primary investigator in multiple landmark clinical trials investigating renal denervation.

This procedure will be performed at the catheterization labs at Virtua Mount Holly and Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes hospitals. Dr. Sanghvi shared that the following patients are eligible for this treatment:

- Patients with resistant hypertension, defined by blood pressure >130/80 mm Hg despite being on three medications with maximally tolerated doses from classes with outcomes data (angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors or angiotensin II receptor blockers, calcium channel blockers, thiazide diuretics, and beta blockers)
- Patients with uncontrolled hypertension despite attempting lifestyle modification and antihypertensive medication but who are either intolerant of additional medication or do not wish to be on additional medications and who are willing to undergo renal denervation after shared decision-making
- Priority may be appropriately given to patients with higher cardiovascular risk (e.g., comorbidities of coronary artery disease, diabetes, prior transient ischemic attack/cerebrovascular accident, or chronic kidney disease), who may have the greatest benefit from blood pressure reduction

In anticipation of this new procedure being available at Virtua, an order was created in Epic to facilitate patient referral. Use Ambulatory Referral to Invasive Hypertension Management. An image of the order can be found here:



For additional information, reach out to [VirtuaVeinandVascularExperts@Virtua.org](mailto:VirtuaVeinandVascularExperts@Virtua.org). Read more in [ROI-NJ](#) or in Virtua's [press release](#).

## New! CME Accreditation Transitioning to Rowan-Virtua SOM

As a next and exciting step in the evolution of the Virtua Health College of Medicine & Life Sciences, **starting Feb. 1**, Rowan-Virtua School of Osteopathic Medicine (SOM) will accredit all Virtua Continuing Medical Education (CME) activities for physicians. Rowan-Virtua SOM is accredited with commendation by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME).

Previously, requests for educational activities were coordinated through Virtua Health, which is accredited through the Medical Society of New Jersey (MSNJ). Effective Feb. 1, new requests will continue to be coordinated by Virtua, but the Office of Continuing Education at Rowan-Virtua SOM will accredit the activity for *AMA PRA Category 1 credits™* for physicians.

What to expect:

- Currently scheduled CME programs will see no change. Current participants will still receive awarded credits.
- The application process for new programs will be communicated in the coming weeks, via *Clinician Update* and directly through Virtua. Guidance will be provided to ensure that all current programs will continue without interruption.

For additional questions or concerns, contact Sue Politsky, director of professional development and nursing research, at [spolitsky@virtua.org](mailto:spolitsky@virtua.org).

## Identifying Patients for Advanced Heart Failure Therapy

### Upcoming Event: Friday, Jan. 19

Join Tolulope Agunbiade, MD, director of Virtua's Advanced Heart Failure Program and Chun W. Choi, MD, vice president of clinical operations for Virtua's Cardiovascular Service Line, for an informational session on advanced heart failure therapies.

Providers will gain an understand of:

- Who should be considered for advanced heart failure therapies
- How a left ventricular assist device (LVAD) functions
- How an LVAD is implanted and the postoperative care required
- A day in the life of an LVAD patient

When and Where:

**Friday, Jan. 19** at 12p.m. ([Teams](#) or In-Person)

Physicians Conference Room

1600 Haddon Ave, Camden, NJ 08103

Click to [view the flyer](#).

[Click here to join the meeting](#) (Jan. 19 at 12 p.m.)

For more information, contact Theresa Rowe-Ruffin, director of Heart Failure Services, at [troweruf@virtua.org](mailto:troweruf@virtua.org) or 856-886-6468.

## Virtua Prescription Coverage Transitions to OptumRx

As reported in *Clinician Update*, Optum Rx replaced CVS Caremark as Virtua’s employee pharmacy benefit manager on Jan. 1, 2024. Additionally, the Virtua Specialty Pharmacy is now the primary source for specialty pharmacy needs. New Optum Rx prescription cards have been sent to benefits members, along with details about the new insurance plan.

Questions are welcome. Connect with the benefits team at 856-761-3900, option 3.

## Virtua in the News

### Respiratory Illnesses Continue to Mount

Virtua experts provided their insights on the rising cases of flu, COVID-19, RSV, and other respiratory viruses. Angela Skrzynski, DO, lead physician for telehealth, discusses the spread of illnesses in families on [CBS 3](#). That story also features Tracy Carter, senior philanthropy officer, and her family—who shared their experience of being sick over the holidays. Separately, Martin Topiel, MD, chief infection officer, explained how people can stay healthy in this [Courier-Post](#) story, which also appears in the [Burlington County Times](#) and [Vineland Daily Journal](#).

### Press Ganey Recognizes Virtua for Employee Engagement

Virtua is among a select group of health systems to earn Press Ganey's "Pinnacle of Excellence Award." Virtua received this award for its outstanding employee experience. Press Ganey is a global company that helps health care organizations transform the care experience and continuously improve. Read at [PressGaney.com](https://www.pressganey.com) and in [Becker's Hospital Review](#).

## Virtua Is "All In" on Excellence

Thank you for being *All In on Excellence*! This week, we begin the third chapter, "On Purpose," with the first tip, "Who Will We Be?"

These insights encourage introspection and team cohesion. It's an opportunity to reflect on your initial inspiration for choosing a career in health care and to reassess what keeps you motivated. Engaging in this discussion will deepen your understanding of your personal motivations and reveal shared values and goals within your team. This mutual understanding is vital for maintaining a high standard of excellence and ensuring that your collective efforts are aligned with a common purpose.

Click to [view the tip](#).

## Meet Neena Singh, MD, OR and Musical Maestro

General surgeon Neena Singh, MD, believes her role is to be an active listener because she is committed to quality outcomes and providing the best care for her patients. And it turns out, she's also fun to listen to. Click to [view the video](#).

## 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:

"The staff is great! Always in and out. They show they care about your health. Thanks to all for a great experience." (Shanekqua Carter, CNM)

"Great care, great support, great amount of time given to the patient!" (Emilio Mazza, MD)

"Makes you feel very comfortable and that you matter." (Eric Strauss, MD)

"Absolutely a wonderful doctor. Made me feel very comfortable and answered all my questions. He was actually a doctor that listened, and on top of that, he was extremely knowledgeable both in and beyond his field of specialties. The staff was amazing as well. Definitely a five-star doctor and office." (Khaled El-Badawi, MD)

"He was pleasant, knowledgeable, and listened to my concerns. He offered suggestions for care, and truly cared about my health. I'm happy to be a patient." (Eric Szejman, MD)

## Going From Grateful to Greatness in 2024

Across Virtua, our physicians, clinical teams, and colleagues are listening and responding to patients each day, especially when they are sharing their feelings of gratitude. Gratitude is a simple, scientifically proven way to increase happiness, encourage greater joy, and heighten our feelings of connectedness to one another.

Shailen Shah, MD, maternal-fetal medicine specialist, discusses how embracing gratitude from patients can renew one's calling to medicine and help clinicians through challenging days in [this video](#).

As you hear expressions of gratitude from patients or their loved ones this year, we encourage you to respond warmly and let them know about [The Lasting Impact Project](#).

This is a great way for patients and their families to share their gratitude in a way that is meaningful to them. Whether they share their story, write a review, or make a gift in honor of a caregiver or team, their expression of gratitude will uplift us all.

Three Ways YOU Can Have a Lasting Impact:

1. Check out The Lasting Impact Project on the Colleague Corner to find helpful tools including videos, Brand Hub materials, and more. Click [here](#) or find The Lasting Impact Project under the Colleague Central tab.
2. Refer grateful patients to the philanthropy team via Epic by entering the keyword "gratitude" into your referral orders or send a message via Qliq to @Meghan Walsh.
3. Set up a gratitude learning session with a member of our philanthropy team, so we can help your practice or unit develop a deeper understanding of the healing power of gratitude. Get in touch with us at [gratitude@virtua.org](mailto:gratitude@virtua.org).

To learn more about The Lasting Impact Project, visit [virtua.org/gratitude](https://virtua.org/gratitude).

## Embracing the Spirit of Service on Martin Luther King Jr. Day

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'" – Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

As we approach Jan. 15, we are reminded of the significance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, a day to honor one of history's most influential civil rights leaders. This year's theme, as presented by the King Center, is: *It Starts with Me: Shifting the Cultural Climate through the Study and Practice of Kingian Nonviolence*.

Recognized nationally as a day of service, it's a time to actively contribute to the community in a manner that reflects Dr. King's vision of a connected and socially just society.

“It is a ‘day on,’ not a ‘day off,’” said Virtua primary care physician Donee Thomas-Patterson, MD, who will help with a clothing and book drive for a community-service organization in Burlington County.

“The message of Dr. King is not one of complacency, but action,” said Dr. Thomas-Patterson. “Pay it forward. Find your way to be active in the purpose of spreading good. There are MLK celebrations, neighborhood clean-ups, and history lessons to learn from. Also, involve your children. Let them know what it means to be that good influence upon this world we share.”

For those who prepare to volunteer, we encourage you to reflect on the following:

- How can I extend my commitment to service throughout the year?
- What impact could my team or department make if we volunteered together?
- Are our service efforts focused on assisting underrepresented communities?
- How have I used resources and learning opportunities to advance my understanding and action toward inclusion, diversity, and equity at Virtua and beyond?

In recognition of this observance, the Black and African American Colleague Community (BAACC) at Virtua honors leaders like Theresa Rowe-Ruffin, director of heart failure services, for her 20-year dedication to quality care and health education, and Angela Bess, MD, a Virtua OB GYN, for her longstanding commitment to accessible health care.

To learn more about MLK Day, we encourage you to explore resources such as:

[The 15-Year Battle for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day](#)

[Celebrating the Life and Legacy of Dr. King](#)

[Jersey Cares: Community Service Projects](#)

If you are planning days of service and acts of kindness honoring Dr. King, we encourage you to share photos, stories, and reflections with the [Virtua Colleague Facebook Group](#) and by emailing [virtuainfo@virtua.org](mailto:virtuainfo@virtua.org). We want to highlight these inspirational efforts in our communications and social media channels.

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

[Korean American Day](#), on Jan. 13, commemorates over 120 years of Korean Americans in the United States. This day was established in 2005 to acknowledge and learn about the experiences and contributions of Korean Americans in this country.