

Clinician Update

January 25, 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](#).**

Breaking News: Virtua Receives CMS Approval for LVAD Procedure

Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) certified the Advanced Heart Failure Program at Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital to implant left ventricular assist devices (LVADs) in patients with advanced heart failure. These devices pump blood throughout the body, rather than relying upon a failing heart.

Congratulations to the Virtua Advanced Heart Failure team who worked incredibly hard to obtain this designation, especially Tolu Agunbiade, MD, medical director of the Virtua Advanced Heart Failure Center, and Theresa Rowe-Ruffin, MSN, CRNP, administrative director for the program.

Important Details on New Continuing Medical Education (CME) Process

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

“We are on a journey towards joint accreditation,” said Joshua Coren, DO, director of Continuing Medical Education for the Rowan-Virtua School of Osteopathic Medicine. “Our vision is for us to be regional leaders and interprofessional influencers of continuing education.”

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.

Here is what to expect:

- This week, all current continuing medical education program planners received an instructional email. If you have not received your email yet, please contact spolitsky@virtua.org.
- Within the next two weeks, program planners will receive another email that includes “NEW” Rowan-Virtua SOM accreditation slides. Please begin to use these slides **Feb 1**, and discard previous Virtua Health slides.

- Program planners will receive a “NEW” hyperlink/QR code that has been redesigned using Rowan-Virtua SOM official accreditation statement. This hyperlink/QR code will be ready for use **Feb 1**. The existing Virtua Health hyperlink/QR code will be *deactivated* on **Feb 10**, so if you have not completed a survey for 2024, please do it before this time as this is the only option to obtain a certificate.
- The process generally remains the same as it was, however being a new collaboration, there may be some refinements. Please continue to email Lisa Lanter at llanter@virtua.org the program documents, including rosters, dates including topics with the speakers’ names for regular scheduled series (RSS), and completed “Disclosure of All Financial Relationships from Planners, Faculty, and Others” for any new speaker or planner. One adjustment that was agreed upon is that slide decks for RSSs will NOT need to be sent.
- The program planners will continue to receive summative reports.

All physicians will receive a bi-annual email with a brief questionnaire that will help determine if you have made any changes to your practice because of participating in the education programs. This is critically important, and we strongly encourage you to complete when received.

Virtua Health’s Reimagined Website to Launch Next Week

For well over a year, we’ve been working behind the scenes to completely rethink the ways people digitally experience Virtua Health. And after countless hours of brainstorming, designing, coding, and collaboration, the wait is almost over—a reimagined [Virtua.org](https://www.virtua.org) launches next week.

Working from the ground up, the new [Virtua.org](https://www.virtua.org) features a treasure trove of enhanced features and capabilities. The significantly faster site will have improved search functionality, intuitive menus, robust privacy settings, and revamped content. And, of course, a fresh, modern aesthetic that reflects the vibrant energy of Virtua’s brand.

We understand that with a project of this magnitude, there may be a few challenges upon launch. Rest assured, our teams will monitor the new site closely and act quickly to resolve any issues.

We’re excited to bring this new digital experience to you. Stay tuned for the big reveal!

Hospital at Home Approaching 1,000 Patients

This month, Virtua’s [Hospital at Home](#) program celebrates its two-year anniversary. Since its launch, more than 900 patients representing 60-plus medical conditions have participated, and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. In further good news, eligibility for Hospital at Home is expanding thanks to a new law in New Jersey which Virtua leaders helped shape and support.

Virtua Is “All In” on Excellence

Thank you for being *All In on Excellence*! This week, our focus is the concept of being “On Purpose” with the tip, “What it means to be us.”

Through these insights, colleagues are encouraged to understand the values that bring them together and drive the team’s success. This isn’t just about the work we do; it’s about who we are as a team and how we support each other. We invite you to actively engage with this concept. Pinpoint specific actions that relate to your team’s values. This could be anything from the way we communicate with each other to how we approach problem-solving and decision-making. This is an opportunity to identify and celebrate what makes us unique, to recognize the strengths in our differences, and to reinforce what unites us. The more we talk about the tip with one another, the more we will discover.

Click to [view the tip](#).

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 is thorough, knows my history, and listens to me, then explains the options to address my symptoms and how I feel they are affecting me. Highly recommend his care.” (Samuel Ventrella, MD)

“He was great. He explained everything to me and took his time with me. 5 stars.” (Christopher Mercogliano, DO)

“I saw her via telehealth. I felt so comfortable talking to her—we could have talked for hours!” (Jennifer Rubenstein, MD)

“He is an excellent doctor. He is compassionate, patient, and caring. He’s been my primary physician for over 15 years, and I would not change him for anything else.” (Daniel Casey, MD)

“Ah-----maaaazzinnnnnggg! Is this what doctor visits are supposed to be? Being personalized, informative, patient, caring, kind, sincere, and above all else, focusing on the patient’s needs and concerns. Well, I tell ya, she is the bees knees of awesome OB/GYNs, best that I ever, EVER came across! Thank you, Dr. Kaufman. You have no idea how much this means to me, and the impact of trust you gave me with my health care overall!” (Sheila Kaufman, CNM)

Elevating the Voice of Health Care Consumers in South Jersey

As part of Virtua’s strategic imperative of *Orienting to the Consumer*, Virtua facilitates an online feedback community known as Voice.Activated. With more than 40,000 participants, this community allows us to gain valuable insights from consumers and patients about what matters most to them. Their

willingness to respond to various surveys helps us to stay more connected to their expectations and make more informed decisions.

The accessibility, convenience, and effectiveness of this online platform has prompted us to utilize Voice.Activated moving forward to elicit the type of feedback and ideas that we traditionally sought from our in-person Patient and Family Advisory Councils (PFACs). Voice.Activated offers additional inclusivity and segmentation opportunities so that we can listen to more people more effectively and more often.

Please watch for additional information about how to refer patients and families to [this platform](#), as well as how to engage with our insights team to pose questions and invite ideas from participants in the future.

Virtua in the News

Virtua Physician Shares Snow Safety Tips

Urgent care doctor Rashida Mengi, MD, offered health advice during the recent winter storm. She noted that people often slip on ice that's hidden under a thin layer of snow and advised using good posture when shoveling to prevent back injuries. Watch on [CBS 3](#). (**Note:** Dr. Mengi's interview follows those of a non-Virtua provider and patient.)

Colleague Helps Parents Grieving Loss of a Baby

Ann Coyle, RNC, has long held a unique role at Virtua. As manager of perinatal bereavement programs, she provides a range of support services for parents who've lost a baby at any point from conception through the first year of life. Read about Ann's incredible contributions, including the creation of the Angel Garden at Virtua Voorhees Hospital, in [NJ Spotlight News](#).

Running with Rowan-Virtua SOM

The 9th annual [Run for Rowan 5K](#) will take place at Rowan University's Glassboro campus on Saturday, April 20, with a virtual option to complete 3.1 miles (anywhere of your choosing) between April 20 and April 26.

The last three years, the Rowan-Virtua School of Osteopathic Medicine Team won awards for the highest number of race registrants. In 2024, the hope is to keep that tradition going. The team consists of runners, joggers, walkers, strollers, etc. All are welcome. To join the team and register for the event, click [here](#). For general information on how to register, click [here](#).

Last year, medical school student Sandra Wilson, OMS1, won the Female Overall Division with a time of 21:39, and James William Bailey, DO, came in 6th overall and won his age division with a time of 20:15.

Proceeds from this year's event benefit Rowan University's First-Generation Task Force program initiative [Flying First](#), supporting academic success for first-generation students. Registration will close on April 1. All runners will receive a limited edition Centennial 5K t-shirt and medal.

Wear Red and Share Your Photos on National Wear Red Day

Friday, Feb. 2 is National Wear Red Day®, and we are encouraging our colleagues to wear red and take a photo to raise awareness for the No. 1 killer of women—cardiovascular disease. Over 60 million women in the United States are living with some form of heart disease, so let's show our support for the women in our lives by wearing red. Please be sure to post your photos to the Virtua Colleague Facebook group on Feb. 2 and email them to virtuainfo@virtua.org.

Here for Good: Inside Edition Includes Discussion on Epilepsy Awareness

[In this insightful episode of "Here for Good: Inside Edition,"](#) Dennis Pullin hosts Kara Cornaglia, who celebrates her 20th year at Virtua. As a senior facilities project manager, Kara has been instrumental in several key projects, including the construction of Virtua Voorhees Hospital and the integration of Lourdes Health System.

Alongside her work, Kara enjoys spending time with her family. Her son has pursued a creative career path as a director of photography, while her daughter, a young adult with special needs, has inspired Kara to advocate for epilepsy awareness. Jan. 26 is [1 in 26 Day](#), a reference to the statistic that one in every 26 Americans will develop epilepsy in their lifetime. Kara also highlights the value of [seizure first aid training and certification](#) and learning [to help an individual having a seizure](#).

Virtua Colleagues Give Back in Record Numbers

The kindness of Virtua colleagues knows no bounds. Your daily work helps our neighbors to be well, get well, and stay well, and you even make a difference beyond your professional roles. Our Give for Good colleague giving campaign is a great example.

We are pleased to share that our 2023 Give for Good campaign was a record-breaking year thanks to 1,397 colleagues—including every senior leader—who made a gift. Our colleague donors supported funds that are having an impact across Virtua.

“Making a philanthropic investment through Give for Good is important to me as a physician and community member,” said Randolph B. Deger, MD. “It’s a way to do all I can to support the health and well-being of everyone we serve.”

To learn more, visit GiveToVirtua.org/Colleagues. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Philanthropy at 856-355-0830 or gratitude@virtua.org.

IDEA – Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity for All

This Saturday, Jan. 27 marks the [International Day of Commemoration](#), honoring the victims and survivors of the Holocaust. This year's theme pays tribute to their extraordinary bravery and resilience.

We also express our appreciation to Donee Thomas-Patterson, MD, primary care physician, and Theresa Rowe-Ruffin, director of heart failure services, for their example of community service on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Dr. Thomas-Patterson helped with a clothing and book drive for a local service organization in Burlington County. Theresa participated in various service projects in Gloucester Township.