

Clinician Update

July 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](#).**

Team Collaboration Proving to Be a Success for LVAD Program at Virtua

Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital has received a full, three-year accreditation by DNV—a global independent certification, assurance, and risk management provider—as a ventricular assist device (VAD) facility. The hospital earned its initial certification in December, and the full accreditation as the result of a site visit last month.

DNV credentialing affirms Virtua’s readiness to provide the full spectrum of VAD Program services—diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, patient and community education—and provides clear metrics to evaluate program outcomes.

“This is a testament to a total collaboration of many clinicians, including physicians, surgeons, advanced practice nurses, coordinators, and administrators,” said Theresa Rowe-Ruffin, MSN, CRNP, administrative director of advanced heart failure at Virtua. “Together, the support provided here at Virtua allows the team to provide the best care available.”

The team performed its first left ventricular assist device (LVAD) implantation in May and continues to garner media coverage. Read the latest story in [The Trentonian](#).

“The LVAD can support patients for the long term or serve as a bridge for individuals who may later be a candidate for a heart transplant,” said Tolu Agunbiade, MD, medical director of Virtua’s Advanced Heart Failure Center.

“The LVAD assists the heart’s function and takes over the work of the left ventricle, pumping blood to the vital organs, just like the normal heart would,” said cardiothoracic surgeon Dan Choi, MD, vice president of clinical operations for Virtua’s cardiovascular service line.

To learn more about Virtua Health’s Advance Heart Failure Center, [click here](#).

Supporting Our Patients With Liver Disease & Substance Use Disorders

As many as 75% of liver transplants are a result of alcoholic hepatitis. That is why the liver care providers at Virtua Advanced Transplant & Organ Health have partnered with our Medication for Addiction Treatment (MAT) program to provide our community with treatment options that directly combat the urge to drink alcohol, helping patients abstain.

“Virtua’s MAT program uses medication paired with behavioral therapy to help patients recover from substance use disorder. The program is particularly beneficial for alcoholic liver disease patients, as both our programs take a harm-reduction approach to care for these patients,” said addiction medicine specialist Lynda M. Bascelli, MD. “We recognize that alcohol use disorder is a disease that should be managed just as any other disease, without judgment.”

“This program will positively impact our patients and our communities,” said transplant hepatologist Hisham ElGenaidi, MD. “Not only will it help transplant patients to qualify for a transplant and have a successful transplant surgery by helping protect the health of the donor organ, it will also help those with liver disease to avoid the need for transplant in the first place.”

Virtua’s plan is to grow these much-needed services via the region’s first-of-its-kind collaboration to address the full spectrum of physical and addiction-related needs in our communities.

To learn more about organ health services (liver, kidney, and pancreas) at Virtua, click [here](#). For more information on drug and alcohol addiction treatment at Virtua, click [here](#).

Advancing the Patient Experience

The summer is speeding by, and so is our Advanced Patient Experience Program with Practicing Excellence. We have now entered Week 14 of the 26-week program. As always, we present the [Week 14 Guide](#), complete with links and discussion questions.

This week, we shine a spotlight on *Track 7: Ambulatory Clinicians*. They are watching the tip, [“What Patients Are Really Asking For.”](#) This video identifies ways to support and care for teammates.

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:

“She is a kind, caring doctor. She listens carefully and doesn’t miss a thing. I’m very comfortable with her. I wouldn’t go anywhere else.” (Deepthi Subramanya, MD)

“I have been seeing Dr. Khan for many years and travel over an hour to see her since we moved. She also sees my wife and brother-in-law, who also love her.” (Sophia S. Khan, MD)

“I cannot say enough positive things about her. She is one of the best medical providers I've ever met. She takes time with her patients. She listens and gives advice if warranted. She makes me feel extremely comfortable when we meet and always takes my concerns seriously. (Floriya Tkachuk-Mattioli, APN)

“You're the best doctor I have ever had or seen. You take your time, you're smart, and most importantly, you care. Thank you for always being there for me.” (Farrel Silverman, DO)

“He truly cares for his patients. He is kind and considerate, I trust him completely.” (James Gamble, MD)

Virtua Vascular Surgeon Honored

Vascular surgeon Constantine T. Andrew, MD, was recently honored by Medtronic Cardiac and Vascular for his work with AAA stent graft implants, which are designed to treat abdominal aortic aneurysms using a minimally invasive procedure. Kudos to Dr. Andrew for his fine work and dedication to his patients. You can read more about this special [recognition here](#).

Transforming Hospital Stays for Kids

The hospital can be a daunting place, especially for children. However, with the support of colleagues like Christina Conlan and our team of child life specialists, we can make the experience much more comfortable.

In this [episode](#) of "Here for Good: Inside Edition," Christina walks President and CEO Dennis Pullin through the impactful work of our child life specialists. From creating themed events to ensuring kids don't miss out on big moments to helping parents who might feel overwhelmed, this team makes such a difference for South Jersey families.

Click to [view the video](#).

Virtua Home Care Announces Relocation

Virtua Home Care has moved from Mount Laurel to a new location. The new address is:

301 Lippincott Drive, 2nd Floor
Marlton, NJ 08053

This change is effective July 12. Their phone number, 1-800-858-5172, remains the same.

Virtua in the News

Covid Bump Hits New Jersey & Beyond

Covid rates are rising here and in other regions due to summer gatherings, travel, and new variants, among other factors. Angela Skrzynski, DO, lead physician for Virtua Primary Care Telehealth, discussed the situation and how to avoid illness. And Teri Madosky, lead medical assistant at Virtua Primary Care – Hammonton, shared her recent experience having Covid, which felt like “the flu on steroids.” Watch on [CBS 3](#).

Leaders Predict Future of Care Delivery

Tarun Kapoor, MD, SVP, and chief digital transformation officer, was among 46 information technology and finance leaders tapped by an industry publication for their insights on health care's future. He predicted that people will continue to "reach out to organizations they trust to help them get better." Read in [Becker's Hospital Review](#).

Security Advisory: Protecting Against Phishing

In recent weeks, our Security Awareness team has noticed a rise in phishing attempts utilizing compromised business partner email addresses. It's crucial to recognize that these emails may look legitimate since they are from a trusted source.

These deceptive emails typically include a link or an attachment that prompts you to enter log-in details on a fraudulent website. Engaging with these emails poses a risk of your credentials being stolen. Cybercriminals are adept at creating a sense of urgency to provoke immediate action.

Preventive Measures:

- Always verify the authenticity of an email by contacting the supposed sender through a known phone number, especially if the email contains unexpected requests or directs you to click on links or download software.
- Exercise caution with emails that seem out of character, even from familiar senders. Phishers may compromise legitimate accounts to make their traps more convincing.
- Use the "Report Phish" or "Report Suspicious" buttons to alert us about any questionable emails.

By staying vigilant and following these guidelines, we can collectively safeguard our information and maintain a secure working environment. Remember, when in doubt, reach out directly to the sender for verification.

Please share this advisory with your teams and encourage them to report any suspicious activity. Together, we can strengthen our defense against these cyber threats.

IDEA – Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity for All

July 14 is International Non-Binary People's Day, culminating Non-Binary Awareness Week. This week recognizes individuals whose gender identity does not align with the categories of man or woman, solely or at all. This date was intentionally chosen to fall between International Women's Day on March 8, and International Men's Day on Nov. 19.

Did you know you Virtua offers the *Mx.* option for those who use this honorific title—as well as pronouns that extend beyond he/him/his and she/her/hers—in Virtua Works? Head over to your profile to update if you haven't already.

Click to [learn more about ways to become an ally](#), such as using inclusive language and not making assumptions about a person's gender identity, pronouns, or honorific title (Mr./Mrs./Mx).

July 14 also marks [Bastille Day](#). This French federal holiday commemorates the Storming of the Bastille in 1789, a pivotal event during the French Revolution.