

Clinician Update

July 8, 2021

New COVID-19 Vaccination Policy: What You Need to Know

Last week, Virtua leadership announced that all colleagues must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by **Sept. 15, 2021**. This policy extends to contracted personnel, agency staff, residents, fellows, volunteers, and any other individual whose primary work location is a Virtua Health facility.

To get a full understanding of this new policy and who it pertains to, please consult the document [Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination](#), available on the VINE.

The details of the policy are also available in an FAQ format. Please read the [vaccine FAQs](#), also available on the VINE, for answers to many questions, including:

- Who is covered by the COVID-19 vaccination policy?
- How do I submit a request for a medical or religious exemption?
- I already had COVID-19, do I still need to get the vaccine?
- Do colleagues who work remotely need to be vaccinated?

If you have not been vaccinated against COVID-19, we ask that you make a plan in order to meet the Sept. 15 deadline. Vaccines are easy to come by; here are three options for your consideration.

1. Virtua is reopening its vaccine clinic inside the Barry D. Brown Health Education Center in Voorhees, often called the HEC. All colleagues who are currently listed as unvaccinated in Virtua's records will receive an email with a scheduling link. This message is set to go out today, **Thursday, July 8**, and contains a link that allows the colleague to select an appointment at the HEC between 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the following days:

Tuesday, July 13

Thursday, July 15

Monday, July 19

Tuesday, July 20

Second doses will also be available at the HEC following the appropriate three-week interval. Any colleague who does not receive a scheduling link can call the Access Center at **856-325-3744** or email covidmegasite@virtua.org to schedule an appointment for the HEC. **Note:** Even though the email address includes the word "mega site," the Access Center team is set up to schedule for the HEC.

2. The Burlington County COVID-19 Vaccine Mega-Site is open on select days through July 23. First-dose appointments are no longer necessary; walk-ups are encouraged. (Please note: Anyone who receives a first dose at the mega-site will need to go to a different vaccine location to receive the second dose.) Click [here](#) for additional details.
3. Colleagues are also welcome to receive the vaccine at a non-Virtua location if that is more convenient. Visit the [State of New Jersey's COVID-19 Information Hub](#) for a searchable list of clinics and information on transportation assistance.

- a. If you are vaccinated outside of Virtua, you must submit documentation of your vaccination to covidvaccinedocumentation@virtua.org by the Sept. 15 deadline. If you have not already submitted the documentation, please send:
- Proof of immunization (a picture or copy of your completed CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card is sufficient)
 - Full name
 - Title
 - Employee ID (or employer if a non-Virtua employee)

If you received the vaccine at a Virtua location or previously submitted vaccination information from a non-Virtua location, there is no need to do so again. You can validate your information in Virtua Works: Your Profile>Personal>Additional Data. Click to view the [Quick Reference Guide](#).

Thank you for your support and cooperation as we take this important, necessary step in making our care facilities and campuses as safe as possible.

Latest COVID-19 Fast Facts

As a reminder, Virtua's COVID-19 census had remained so low that we are no longer creating daily trending graphs. We will continue to share NJ Department of Health data to summarize the current state of both COVID transmission and vaccination progress.

- The rate of transmission in New Jersey stands at 0.92.
- The state's Vaccination Overview dashboard reports 10,078,605 doses of vaccine have been administered.
- The total number of cases as of 3 p.m. are as follows:
 - Burlington County: 38,453 cases
 - Camden County: 49,252 cases
 - Gloucester County: 26,697 cases
- COVID-associated mortality for Camden, Burlington, and Gloucester counties: 2,651.

Virtua Memorial to Receive New Name: Virtua Mount Holly Hospital

Later this year, Virtua Memorial Hospital will begin a dramatic campus transformation unlike anything in its history. The intention is to modernize the facility, expand services, and improve the overall experience for patients, visitors, and staff.

This remarkable renovation also presents the opportunity to give the hospital a name that is more consistent with Virtua's other acute care locations. Therefore, the new, official name is **Virtua Mount Holly Hospital**.

Although it will take time to implement the change and adjust to the new name, Virtua Mount Holly Hospital gives a clear sense of place and demonstrates to the residents of Burlington County that we are *Here for Good*, and here for them.

News this big always comes with questions. Please continue reading for further clarity.

Why change the name? Facility names are meant to clearly communicate who we are, where we are, and the services we provide. Virtua Marlton, Voorhees, and Willingboro hospitals all have their location

in their name, making them easy to remember and distinguish. Although it can be hard to move away from what's familiar, we are going to focus on the future by updating both the building and the name.

When will the name change take effect? It will take several months to update the name. In addition to the signage on, in, and around the building, the name appears all over the Virtua website, the VINE, and on official documents with state and local agencies. We will work together over time to update our collateral and materials.

The one thing we can do immediately is begin calling the hospital by its new name and help our patients, families, and friends grow accustomed to the change.

Will Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes also receive a name change? No. Virtua has a formal relationship with the Diocese of Camden that upholds and honors the healing ministry of the Catholic Church. Additionally, the tertiary care services available at Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital attracts patients from a wide geographic area, making it more of a regional destination than Camden-specific. Therefore, the name will remain as it is.

What does the "Memorial" of Virtua Memorial refer to? The word "memorial" appears in many hospital names nationwide and beyond. Its original significance for our specific hospital (which was called Burlington County Hospital from its founding in 1880 until 1963) has faded over the decades. By contrast, there is only one Mount Holly in all of New Jersey, and we have served that community for well over a century. This name celebrates Mount Holly as a special place to work in or call home well into the future.

New Chair Named to Virtua Integrated Network Board

The Virtua Integrated Network Board of Directors has elected **Joshua S. Coren, DO, MBA, FACFP**, to serve as board chairman. Dr. Coren will now help oversee the largest clinically integrated network in South Jersey, consisting of 257 primary care clinicians and more than 1,000 specialists spanning five counties — Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Mercer — and covering well over 100,000 lives.

VIN President Donna Antenucci noted that Dr. Coren is the first physician to hold the role, and said, "Dr. Coren brings much valuable experience to his new role. As an active member of the Virtua Integrated Network Board, he has assisted in supporting the initiatives and goals of the organization, ensuring the needs of the population are served."

Dr. Coren is a member of Rowan Family Medicine, Mount Laurel, a practice well regarded in the community. He is also the interim associate dean of clinical affairs, chair and professor of the Department of Family Medicine, and director of continuing medical education at the Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine, which provides learning opportunities designed to improve patient outcomes.

VN is part of Virtua's commitment to providing a complete spectrum of advanced and accessible health care services that is accountable in its quality of care. "Providing the utmost in patient care is our common denominator," said Dr. Coren. "I am honored to work with my fellow clinicians as we serve the community with unwavering attention to positive outcomes."

To learn more about VIN, contact Donna Antenucci at DAntenucci@virtua.org.

Virtua's Heart Failure Centers Offer Access, Improved Quality of Life

Through community-based centers following an evidence-based model of care, Virtua offers a collaborative approach of outpatient heart failure services to assist patients across the entire spectrum of care. The model, which relies heavily on advanced practice nurses, has demonstrated important outcomes, including:

- Improved 6-minute walk scores
- Improved Minnesota Living with Heart Failure Quality of Life scores
- 96% compliance with guideline-directed medical therapy (GMT)
- Reduced (<10%) 30-day all-cause readmission rates

Virtua Heart Failure Centers are patient driven, in that they see patients as frequently as their condition warrants, and protocol-driven with treatments based on AHA, HFSA, and ACC heart failure guidelines. They are also progressive, offering advanced support, along with:

- Intensive and ongoing education of patients and caregivers and a "medical home" with a dedicated phone line offering direct access to heart failure nurses and off-hours access to the on-call cardiologist
- Medication reconciliation, up-titration of medications (with goal to target therapy) per heart failure guidelines, and IV lasix
- Heart failure device monitoring (office and remote), including:
 - CardioMems (pulmonary artery monitoring)
 - CareLink/CorVue (intrathoracic impedance measurements)
 - LifeVest (wearable defibrillator)
- Consideration for advanced therapies (LVAD, transplant) and management of LVAD and inotrope-dependent patients
- "The Village" – Community resources including visiting nurses, physical and outpatient therapy, community dietitians, palliative/hospice programs, home oxygen, cardiology-specific psychiatric counseling, home IV lasix, and home inotropes
- Consideration for protocols with Virtua Clinical Research (*see next article*)

The team works in close collaboration with referring physicians. Each PCP receives a copy of office visit notes, and for those employing Epic, an easy referral process by simply choosing "Ambulatory Referral for Heart Failure" along with the appropriate location (see image below). The referral is sent to the front desk heart failure scheduler, who will call the patient and get the appointment set up within 24 to 48 hours. The team will take things from there.

Ambulatory Referral to Heart Failure Center ✔ Accept ✖ Cancel

Class: **Internal Referral**

Referral: To dept:

To provider:

Reason:

Priority:

Type:

Status:

Expected Date: Approx.

Expires:

[Show Additional Order Details](#) ▼

Next Required ✔ Accept ✖ Cancel

For referring physicians who are not on Epic, simply contact the location directly and we will reach out to your patient to arrange an appointment. [This flyer identifies locations in Camden, Burlington, and Gloucester counties and provides contact information for each.](#)

To learn more about Virtua’s Heart Failure Centers, contact **Theresa Rowe, MSN, CRNP**, Director of Heart Failure Services, at **856-886-6468** or TRowe@virtua.org.

Virtua Clinical Research Expands Access to Cutting-Edge Solutions

Virtua Clinical Research serves as the research arm for Virtua Health, offering your patients the opportunity to participate in clinical trials in a number of therapeutic areas, such as oncology through Penn Medicine. More recently, the department has added to its capabilities by joining with the former Lourdes’ research team that primarily focused cardiac research. Virtua is currently participating in 138 research projects, with active enrollment in 21 cardiac-specific trials.

COVID-19 has provided Virtua with the opportunity to start participating in more phase 2 trials to offer more treatment options to our patients.

Research at Virtua is led by Robert Post, MD, MS, chair, department of family medicine, and physician scientist, Virtua Center for Learning; AnneMarie Palatnik, AVP of clinical learning & academic affiliations; Jillian Hoopes, director of research administration; and Donna Palazzo, manager of research. Cardiac trials are guided by Director of Electrophysiology Darius Sholevar, MD.

“Research is at the heart of modern medicine. Without research, we would never know the best modalities to treat disease or the most efficient and cost-effective ways to diagnose various conditions,” said Dr. Post. “Take the COVID-19 pandemic, for example. Thanks to the research done here at Virtua, and at hospitals all over the world, we were able to find the best treatments to treat COVID, study the strategies to prevent it, and most importantly, develop and study the vaccines that have saved countless lives and can finally get us back to normal.”

“While evidence-based medicine is a critical element of conventional care, advances in therapy require investigation of new modalities in new populations. In order to provide the best possible care, we must sometimes push beyond the limits of known data,” said Dr. Sholevar. “At Virtua, the diligent work of the research physicians and coordinators give our patients access to novel therapies that would not otherwise have been available. In order to continue to provide the best possible care to our patients, Virtua Health remains committed to outstanding quality care and ongoing clinical research.”

For more information on Virtua Clinical Research, contact Dr. Post at rpost@virtua.org, or Jillian Hoopes, BA, CCRP, director of research administration, at jhoopes@virtua.org. For information specific to cardiac trials, contact Dr. Sholevar at dsholevar@virtua.org.

Virtua in the News

Robotic Technology Helps Doctors Reach Remote Parts of Lungs - Virtua is just the second site in New Jersey to offer robotic-assisted bronchoscopy – a minimally invasive technique that can access very small, hard-to-reach growths in the lungs. Interventional pulmonologist **Dr. Syed Riaz** recently demonstrated the leading-edge procedure at Virtua Marlton Hospital. Read and listen [here](#).

Pediatric Mobile Services Unit Celebrates 3-Year Anniversary - About 100 guests – including Camden Mayor Vic Carstarphen, Bishop Dennis Sullivan, and dozens of young children – enjoyed the festive event, which honored founding donor **Sam Lacroce**. Read [here](#).

Virtua Executive Named a Most Influential DEI Leader - Statewide business magazine *ROI-NJ* has named **Rhonda Jordan** to its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Honor Roll for 2021. As Virtua’s executive vice president and chief human resources officer, Rhonda has led the development of Virtua’s “Culture of WE” and helped launch our comprehensive inclusion, diversity, and equity initiative. Read the introduction [here](#) and the section with Jordan’s profile [here](#).

New Jersey Reaches Vaccine Milestone, but We Must Keep Going - This *Fox 29* story, reported from the Burlington County Mega-Site, includes an interview with Virtua family physician **Dr. Sam Weiner**. He says that while we have reason to celebrate, we must continue our vaccination efforts to save more lives. Watch [here](#).

Reminder: Survey Aims to Improve EHR Experience

Virtua Health Information Technology is committed to working with its operational partners to ensure that the Epic electronic health record (EHR) is properly aiding them in providing their patients with a higher quality of care. As such, Virtua recently became a participant of the [KLAS Arch Collaborative](#) – a provider-led effort to unlock the potential of EHRs. Their standardized surveys and benchmarks help health care organizations uncover best practices and move the needle in health care IT.

With that in mind, Virtua clinicians were invited to provide their feedback to the KLAS Arch Collaborative Survey via an email that was recently sent. The results of your input will aid Virtua on its journey of improving patient safety, providing higher quality care, and reducing care delivery costs through more effective workflows. Our caregivers’ experiences are critical for us to understand how we can better implement and optimize our systems to meet their needs going forward.

Clinicians have one more week to provide their feedback. Please check your email for a link to the KLAS survey and complete it no later than **Friday, July 16**. Thank you in advance for your valuable feedback. If you do not have a link to the survey, please send an email to VirtuaClinician@virtua.org to request a new link.

July's Guiding Principle—Purposeful Leadership

Virtua's Culture of WE provides us with a roadmap for how we deliver on our commitments to one another, our patients, and our communities. Our Guiding Principles and WE statements are tangible examples of behaviors expected of all colleagues.

Each month, we focus on a specific Guiding Principle and celebrate organization-wide by spotlighting leader stories and colleague recognition, as well as providing education and opportunities for each of us to actively contribute to our culture and collective success.

Click [here](#) to join **John Matsinger**, EVP and chief operating officer, as he defines Purposeful Leadership at Virtua. Additionally, we invite you to read the following actionable, behavior-based WE statements to demonstrate Purposeful Leadership.

- WE are engaged and ensure the daily huddle is conducted and colleagues actively participate.
- WE are empowered and remove barriers to drive organizational excellence.
- WE live service excellence and hold ourselves and others accountable to consistently live our Guiding Principles.
- WE are intentional in setting a positive tone and environment, fostering individual and organizational excellence.

When we consistently apply these behaviors, we demonstrate commitment to others and drive organizational excellence.

Virtua's Pediatric and Eat Well Programs Are Here for Good

Virtua's Pediatric Early Intervention Program, Pediatric Mobile Services, and Eat Well programs joined forces to deliver more than 1,000 pieces of fruit to hundreds of children living in Burlington and Camden counties. These sweet treats put smiles on their faces and healthy snacks right at their fingertips.

Congratulations Virtua Voorhees Devils!

The 2021 Virtua Co-Ed Softball League's season came to an exciting end as the Virtua Voorhees Devils emerged victorious. With this triumph, the Devils are back-to-back champions, winning the coveted trophy in 2019. Congratulations to the team!

Coming Soon: Virtua's wellness team is hard at work, organizing a fall bowling league to start in September. Look to *Clinician Update* and the Wellness page on the VINE for league updates and information.