

Clinician Update

March 4, 2021

Important Survey Closes Soon: Caring for COVID “Long-Haulers”

Virtua is seeking feedback from our clinicians that will help prepare services and resources for patients dealing with lingering COVID-19 symptoms. Our goal is to understand how people with long-term post-COVID-19 symptoms (including those who were never hospitalized) experience the development, course, and resolution of the illness over time.

[The short online survey](#) should take no more than **five minutes**. It will gather your feedback on the frequency at which you are treating patients with lingering COVID-19 symptoms, and what primary medical concerns these patients have so to learn what resources you will need to care for these patients.

Your input is vital and greatly appreciated. Deadline to submit is **Tuesday, March 9 at 5 p.m.** To participate, click [here](#).

Virtua President and CEO Named to "Power Lists"

Congratulations to **Dennis W. Pullin**, FACHE, president and CEO of Virtua Health. He was just named to *Philadelphia Business Journal's* Power 100 list and *ROI-NJ's* annual Power List of top influencers in the health care industry.

The *Philadelphia Business Journal's* Power 100 list includes leaders from a variety of industries and up-and-comers who are making their names known both locally and nationally. Read more [here](#).

The annual Power List of business magazine *ROI-NJ* features the most influential people in 14 individual sectors or categories. Health care leaders are specifically acknowledged for their fortitude throughout the pandemic. Read more [here](#).

Additionally, Dennis was recently appointed to **Governor Phil Murphy's** New Jersey Health Care Affordability Advisory Group. The committee includes policy leaders, consumer advocates, and representatives from hospitals, providers, and employers.

“Equitable and affordable access to health care services are critical now more than ever for our residents and businesses,” said Governor Murphy. “The Health Care Affordability Advisory Group brings together a diverse and talented team that will continue to build on our efforts to improve access to high-quality, affordable health care for all New Jerseyans.” Read more [here](#).

Congratulations, Dennis!

Rebecca Lynch Honored as a “Woman to Watch”

From South Jersey Biz

In a year in which we witnessed a woman become the first female vice president in United States history, it's only right that we recognize some local ladies for the impact they are making across South Jersey and beyond. The [South Jersey Biz 2021 Women to Watch](#) honorees feature great business minds from various professions who impress with their credentials and inspire with their leadership.

Congratulations to **Rebecca Lynch**, senior vice president and chief operating officer of Virtua Medical Group (VMG), for being honored as a Woman to Watch. Rebecca oversees the management and finance functions of VMG and serves as the operational lead for Virtua's COVID-19 testing and vaccine clinics—representing thousands of patient encounters each day. *South Jersey Biz* asked Rebecca:

What do you love about your industry?

The health care industry is full of resourceful, committed individuals who are fearless. During the COVID-19 pandemic, I witnessed creative and courageous acts across the Virtua system. When your goal as an organization is to be “Here for Good,” how can you not be energized to go into work each day? We make a difference in people's lives, which is something I can really get my arms around.

What is your proudest accomplishment?

This past year has allowed me to see the culmination of many of my prior roles into one “mega” leadership role. I am humbled by the responsibilities I have been given. I am proud that my experience and collaborative style have helped Virtua successfully care for our community during this very difficult and challenging time.

Congratulation, Rebecca!

Rhonda Jordan and Stephanie Fendrick Named Executive Vice Presidents

Virtua announces the promotions of Rhonda Jordan and Stephanie Fendrick to executive vice president roles. Rhonda has been named executive vice president and chief human resources officer and Stephanie has been named executive vice president and chief strategy officer.

Rhonda Jordan brings more than 30 years of outstanding human resources experience, 24 of them at Virtua. She has implemented systems and solutions in the areas of employee and labor relations, organizational effectiveness, and performance management. She has been instrumental in the identification of high performers and high-potential leaders, and in executive and developmental coaching.

In 2019, Rhonda was profiled in *New Jersey Business* magazine as part of its “NJ Women in Business” feature.

“Virtua is regularly listed as a ‘best place to work,’ which is a testament to our people and our culture,” Rhonda says. “I am delighted to continue my professional journey in this new role and to further ensure Virtua’s workforce lives and leads by its values.”

Stephanie Fendrick brings more than 25 years in the health care industry to her executive oversight for Virtua's service-line strategy, key partnerships – including clinical collaborations with Penn Medicine and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia – and enterprise-wide growth initiatives. Over the years, she has accelerated Virtua's reputation and advancement through significant leadership positions.

In 2019, Stephanie was named a Woman of Distinction by the *Philadelphia Business Journal*.

“Maintaining a competitive edge in a region known for health care excellence requires curiosity and a questioning attitude,” Stephanie says. “At Virtua, we encourage creativity and innovation to better serve our communities, and I look forward to helping drive our ongoing transformation.”

Congratulations to Rhonda and Stephanie! News of their recent promotions to executive vice president roles has been featured in [Becker's Hospital Review](#), [HealthLeaders Media](#), and [NJBiz](#).

National Hospitalist Day

Today, March 4, is National Hospitalist Day, which recognizes the contributions of more than 50,000 hospitalists nationwide. The term “hospitalist” was first coined in 1996. Hospitalists manage patient care throughout their inpatient stay and have been proven to reduce readmissions while also serving as leaders in quality improvement and patient safety.

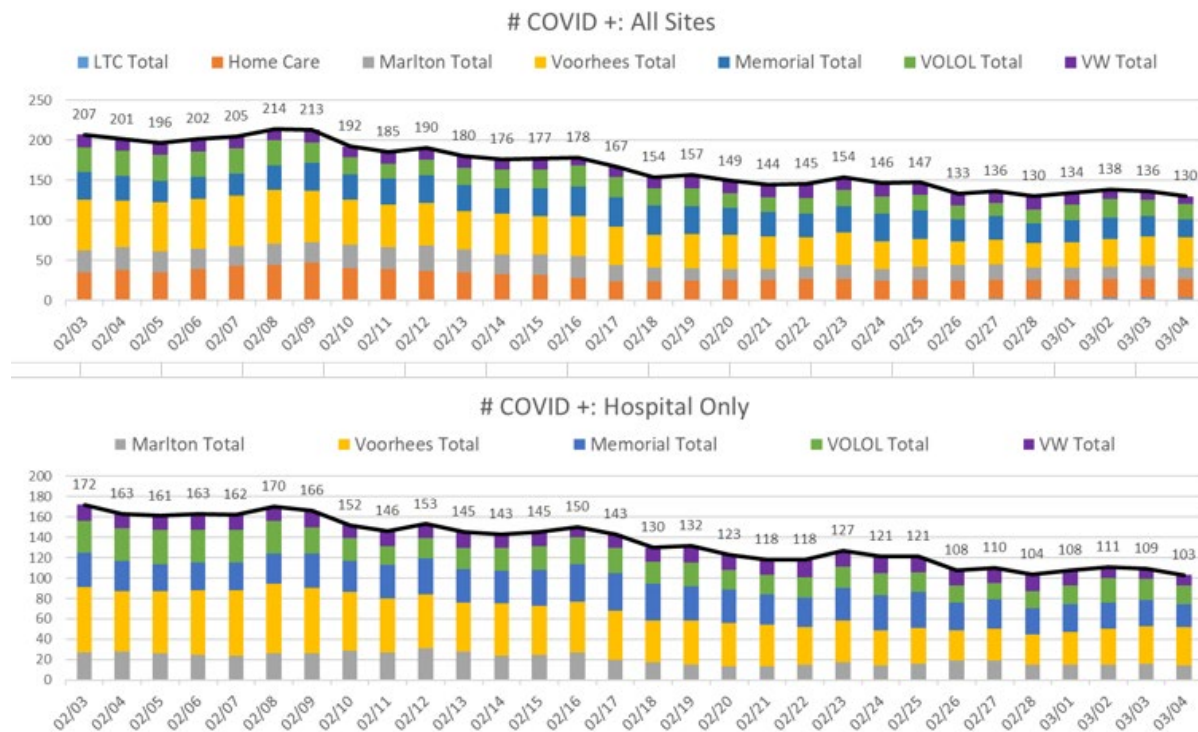
“I extend my appreciation for the hospitalists who work tirelessly across our organization to provide high quality care for our patients,” said **Dr. Christopher Pomrink**, vice president of medical affairs. “Hospitalists provide 24/7 routine and emergency care to our patients. They are integral to process improvement and our high reliability journey. Thank you for everything you do to support Virtua and our patients.”

In honor of National Hospitalist Day, **Dr. Navneet Kaur**, hospitalist at Virtua Memorial Hospital, shared these facts:

A 2009 Loyola University Health System study found that patients co-managed by hospitalists had an average length of stay of 3.8 days, as opposed to an average stay of 5.5 days without co-management by hospitalists.

Additionally, a 2009 Reduction in Readmissions - Teamwork and Leaders of Care Coordination Study showed a reduction in re-hospitalizations and discharge satisfaction due to improved care transitions.

Virtua COVID-19 Census



Fast Facts

- The rate of transmission in New Jersey is currently at 1.01, up once again from previous weeks.
- Locally, in the tri-county area, there have been a total of 2,293 confirmed deaths, as of 1 p.m. today. The state also reports “probable” deaths from COVID-19, with figures shared separately on the [state dashboard](#). For the three counties, probable deaths would account for an additional 178 fatalities.
- The total number of cases are as follows:
 - Burlington County 31,265
 - Camden County 39,828
 - Gloucester County 21,309

FDA Authorizes One-Dose Johnson & Johnson Vaccine

On **Feb. 27**, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration authorized the third coronavirus vaccine for the U.S., this one made by Johnson & Johnson's vaccine division, Janssen Biotech. To prepare for this new addition to the COVID-19 armamentarium, we asked **Dr. Martin Topiel**, Virtua's head of infectious diseases, to respond to the most commonly asked questions about this new J&J vaccine.

- **What would it mean for there to be a third vaccine in the market?** Having a third vaccine that has different storage capabilities and requires only one injection allows us to reach vulnerable people who have less access to care, such as homebound individuals, residents of rural communities, and those whose work does not permit frequent time off. It also adds to the number of doses available to mass vaccination. This is a major step forward.
- **How is the Johnson and Johnson vaccine different from the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines?** The J&J vaccine does not use mRNA. It is an adenovirus vector vaccine, which is a more established approach to vaccine development. I know it can be difficult to compare various vaccines in terms of effectiveness. To me, the most important takeaway is that J&J's data indicates it is equally effective in preventing severe illness and death as the other currently available vaccines. It is also a one-dose vaccine.
- **What are the benefits of a one-dose vaccine?** Having a one-dose vaccine is a game changer. Logistically, it's far simpler for health systems to schedule and provide one-dose appointments. For our community members, it's more convenient. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is also easier to store in terms of temperature, which will assist with distribution.

In short, this third vaccine brings us closer to meeting the need and advancing toward herd immunity. It should give us all a feeling that better days are ahead.

For additional information about all three vaccines, visit the [U.S. Food and Drug Administration website](#). Virtua colleagues can request a vaccine appointment by emailing covidvaccine@virtua.org. Other resources are available at virtua.org/vaccine.

Virtua Mega-Site Reaches Latest Milestone

Last week, we predicted that the Burlington County Vaccine Mega-Site would surpass 100,000 doses, and that milestone was achieved last Saturday, Feb. 27. Virtua colleagues and members of the New Jersey National Guard celebrated with a community member, a Burlington City resident named Ernest,

who was selected at random to participate in Virtua’s celebration moments after receiving his first vaccine dose at the mega-site. The Moorestown facility accounts for more than 70 percent of the total vaccines administered by Virtua since it began vaccinating its own colleagues in mid-December 2020. As the center has been vaccinating several thousand individuals a day, it won’t be long before we reach another important milestone in the days ahead.

More Cures Act Resources

On Feb. 23, Virtua went live to implement the 21st Century Cures Act. Our patients now have greater online access to the health care notes that you, as their clinicians, write through MyChart – their secure, confidential medical record.

To educate and support our clinical staff around the Cures Act, we have been compiling resources to help you navigate this new world. Simply go to the [Digital 411 Physician Help Link](#) on the Vine and click [Cures Act Resources](#). Once on at that link, you can find a series of tip sheets (including [a new tip sheet on documentation](#)), a [checklist](#), a writing [guide](#), recent webinars hosted by [VMG](#) and [VIN and Medical Staff](#), and their respective slide presentations ([VMG](#) and [VIN](#)), and more.

In addition, through our Virtua Learning System (VLS), there are helpful webinars provided by [OpenNotes.org](#), a non-profit organization dedicated to greater transparency in patient communication. Working with Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, OpenNotes is offering a series of webinars that they have generously allowed us to post to the VLS. The topics range from writing open notes to sharing sensitive notes involving palliative care and behavioral health.

- On the [Vine](#), click the button for [Virtua Learning System](#).
- Once opened, click the link to “Access the Virtua Learning System.”
- Then, on upper right, note the search function, and type in” “Cures” or “Cures Act” (both work).
- The four training webinars will open for you to select individually and launch accordingly.
- For each, open the screen fully. Advance the introductory slides via the arrow on the bottom right. The webinar begins on the third slide.

For clinicians with limited access to the VINE, or for direct links to the OpenNotes webinars, go [here](#). You may also benefit from signing up to [OpenNotes newsletter series](#).

Virtua Recognizes Passing of Longtime Cardiologist

[Michael J. Harkins, MD, passed away on Feb. 25](#) following a courageous fight with myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS). Dr. Harkins practiced cardiology at Our Lady of Lourdes from 1976 until he retired in 2019, where he had served as Director of the Cardiac Catheterization Lab and President of the Hospital Staff. He performed the first catheter enzyme drip procedure in South Jersey in 1981. He is remembered as a great leader, always ready to volunteer to step in. He valued his experiences with his patients, his colleagues, and staff, and was known for how much he valued making a connection with all. A viewing was held earlier this week.

In Case You Missed It — Musicians On Call Performance

Musicians on Call, an organization that delivers the healing power of music to hospital patients, hosted their most recent virtual performance yesterday. Local artist Dave Falcone played a session exclusively for hospitals in the Philadelphia region, including Virtua. We invite our hospital colleagues to share the link to the 30-minute show, which can be found on [YouTube here](#).