

Clinician Update

March 9, 2023

Top Docs Polling - *SJ Magazine* - New Deadline Announced - March 31

SJ Magazine's Top Doc Ballot (doctors-only voting) and Top Doc Patient Poll are now open! The deadline for voting for both is **March 31 at 5 p.m.** Note that this is an earlier deadline than in the past. The magazine just released this new time frame so to allow more time for production and photos for the special issue, which will be published in September.

Here's how it works. "If you were ill, who would you go to?" That is the guiding question being asked by *SJ Magazine*. [Click here as a physician to vote.](#)

Please feel free to share, as that patients can vote [here](#).

Looking back to last year, to view the physicians who were chosen by their peers – and patients – as a *SJ Magazine* 2022 Top Doc, [click here](#).

Separately, *SJ Magazine's* annual Top Docs for Kids 2023 issue has been released with a superhero theme. Congratulations to Virtua Primary Care physician-superhero Bhavika N. Patel, MD, whose photo is featured in the issue. Check it out and review [this year's list of the doctors](#) who were chosen for recognition by their peers.

Getting Ready for Practicing Excellence

Practicing Excellence FAQs

We hope you are getting excited for the official launch of Practicing Excellence next month! Below are FAQs to help unite us on where we are to date and what the future holds.

Who is Practicing Excellence for?

All of us! The Practicing Excellence platform was created with physicians in mind. But the creators soon realized that all health care workers—regardless of role—can benefit from the tools and teachings.

Should I download the Practicing Excellence app?

Please do. Practicing Excellence has both desktop and mobile versions. One of the advantages of the mobile app is that you can access the content wherever you go.

Should I watch every tip in the Welcome Program?

Not necessarily. All colleagues should enroll in the Welcome Program and watch the "Welcome" video from Practicing Excellence founder Dr. Stephen Beeson, as well as the tip that follows: "Learn, Try, Share." The other videos in the series focus on a specific area of health care, such as emergency medicine or ambulatory nursing. You are welcome—and encouraged—to watch whatever feels most relevant and interesting to you.

What can I expect with the "official launch"?

Great question. During the first week of April, all clinicians and colleagues will begin a 26-week series on the *Patient Experience*. In next week's *Clinician Update*, you will see instructions on how to enroll in the *Patient Experience* program.

One note: To ensure the content is relevant and meaningful, you will enroll in a “learning track” that reflects your role and work location.

What happens after the launch?

Everyone enrolled in the *Patient Experience* program will be served up a new tip each week. The tips will vary depending on your learning track, but the overall themes and concepts are consistent.

What should I do now?

Make sure you are ready to go for the first week of April. That means everyone should sign up for Practicing Excellence (using the website or app) and become familiar with the features.

Create a Practicing Excellence Account

The first thing to do is to register with Practicing Excellence. **Download the Practicing Excellence app** on your phone by following [these simple steps](#). You can also register for and access Practicing Excellence on its [website](#), but many users prefer the mobile app for its simple navigation and for the ability to engage with the content on the go.

Registration tips:

- While your Virtua email is preferred, please use whatever email address you use most often.
- When prompted to provide a join code, enter the word VIRTUA.
- You will be asked to provide an Employee ID number. That six-digit number should be on the back of your ID badge. If you do not know your ID number, you can enter any sequence of numbers (like 000000) and move ahead with the signup process.

Once registered, you will be automatically enrolled in the Virtua Health Welcome Program, which includes an introduction video from Stephen Beeson, MD, founder and CEO of Practicing Excellence.

Marking 3 Years of COVID-19

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization first characterized COVID-19 as a “pandemic,” stating, “We have rung the alarm bell loud and clear.”

Three years later, as shared by the New Jersey Hospital Association, New Jersey has documented more than 2.5 million COVID-19 cases and 32,894 COVID-19 fatalities through March 7. Another important figure is the 172,696 COVID patients discharged home to date after successful COVID treatment by New Jersey’s hospitals.

The Biden Administration has announced the U.S. public health emergency will expire May 11. For a view of the pandemic by the numbers as provided by the Kaiser Family Foundation, [click here](#).

Changes in Virtua’s Policies

Masking and Testing Protocols for Colleagues Who Are Unvaccinated with Exemption

Effective today, Thursday, March 9, the masking policies for colleagues who are unvaccinated with an exemption have changed. All colleagues who are unvaccinated will adhere to the standard masking policy in accordance to their place of work at Virtua Health.

COVID-19 Testing at All Virtua Hospital Campuses

Beginning Tuesday, March 14, Virtua will change the COVID-19 testing protocol for all patient admissions at all Virtua hospital campuses. Only patients who present with COVID-19 symptoms or are suspected of having COVID-19, or those with recent significant exposures will be tested at the time of admission. Similarly, pre-procedure and pre-surgical testing will only be required of anyone with COVID-19 symptoms or suspected of having COVID-19.

Please note: COVID-19 testing will continue to be required of anyone who is admitted to a Virtua hospital for behavioral health services/care.

Colleagues will continue to maintain Universal Pandemic Precautions using facemasks and eye protection for **all** patient encounters. Similarly, all visitors will be required to wear a facemask.

Patients who are immunocompromised and at higher risk (such as those with transplants, lymphoma, leukemia, and others so identified) should be in private rooms at all times.

Change in Policy:

Infectious Disease of an Employee

The Employee Health and Safety (EHS) team has announced a change in the Infectious Disease of an Employee policy. Colleagues with certain known or suspected infectious or transmissible (communicable) illnesses may not work in order to protect the health of colleagues, patients, and visitors. [Click to view the policy](#) and its listed illnesses for further details and specific circumstances.

Recognizing Patient Safety Awareness Week

Patient Safety Awareness Week reminds us to focus on health care safety and to recognize all the work that we do on our ongoing journey toward being a High Reliability Organization (HRO). As we are *Here for Good*, we are constantly monitoring our outcomes and adjusting our processes so we can provide the best possible experience for our patients and each other. Click [HRO STRONG and Error Prevention Tools](#) to view and share with your team.

Virtua in the News

Showing Our Heart Health Leadership

The media recently spotlighted Virtua for our strong focus on cardiovascular care. Theresa Rowe, administrative director of advanced heart failure at Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, was a guest on [Classics 107.9 FM](#). She discussed heart failure, its signs and symptoms, and many treatment options. Dr. Vincent Spagnuolo, medical director of clinical cardiology, was featured in [South Jersey Magazine](#). He explained the Structural Heart Clinic's advanced capabilities in providing minimally invasive valve procedures such as TAVR. And [Healthcare Innovations](#) recognized Virtua as one of 26 U.S. health systems that have joined the American Heart Association's IMPLEMENT-HF initiative since its 2020 launch. IMPLEMENT-HF aims to create a health care ecosystem for heart failure patients that emphasizes science and patient engagement, and enhances communication and care coordination to improve outcomes.

Virtua Doctor Named to Top Black Physicians List

Dr. Emeka Acholonu, a Virtua bariatric surgeon, has been named to Castle Connolly's list of Top Black Doctors 2023, which honors 114 physicians across 20 states and 45 specialties. Castle Connolly, a respected physician-rating organization, created the new distinction as part of its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative. Read in [Becker's Hospital Review](#).

Virtua Earns National Honor for Improving Communities' Wellness

The federal government has recognized Virtua for its partnership in enhancing peoples' lives. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHS) designated Virtua a "Healthy People 2030 Champion," which centers on the goal of enabling all people to achieve their full potential for health and well-being across their lifespans. In particular, DHS cited Virtua's extensive mobile outreach, which "helps ensure that everyone has the opportunity to be as healthy as possible," said Stephanie Fendrick, EVP and chief strategy officer. Read in [CNB News](#).

Youth Mental Health Crisis: NJ Teens Flooded EDs Again in 2022

Anxious and depressed teenagers poured into New Jersey emergency departments again last year, surpassing 2021's demand for help as the national mental health crisis grows. Two Virtua experts discussed the situation and the need for more resources: Erin Tyson, director of psychiatry consult services, and Russ Micoli, VP for behavioral health services. Read in [NJ.com](#).

Virtua's Digital Transformation Chief Shares Insights

Dr. Tarun Kapoor, SVP and chief transformation officer, recently provided his perspective to two industry publications. In this [Modern Healthcare](#) story, he was among three executive leaders who discussed the adoption of digital health amid today's economic challenges. In [Healthcare Innovations](#), he described partnering with Memora Health to route messages appropriately, leaving clinicians more time to answer critical questions.

National Magazine Features Virtua Marketing Experts

HealthLeaders magazine recently spoke with Virtua's marketing leaders for two separate stories. Chrisie Scott, SVP and chief marketing officer, discussed [how health systems can be more consumer-focused](#). She will participate in a *HealthLeaders* panel on the topic later this month. Ryan Younger, VP of marketing, explained [how Virtua is using artificial intelligence](#) (AI) technology to fine-tune its messages to patients, giving them access to the right information at the right time.

Recognition and Celebration

This week, we reflect on the theme for International Women's Day (March 8), "[Embrace Equity](#)." In creating space to advocate for equity, we honor Judith Heumann, the "mother of the disability rights movement."

Born in Philadelphia, she was well known for her tireless efforts to create equity for people with disabilities. She developed Section 504 legislation, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and more. Learn more about Judy through her TED talk, [Our Fight for Disability Rights and Why We're Not Done Yet](#).

At Virtua, women comprise 79% of our workforce, and our Women of Virtua Colleague Community provides a forum for them to thrive. Today and every day, we thank you for inspiring us and making us better. Check out [this video](#).

Additionally, while on the topic of celebration, happy Holi to those who celebrated this ancient Hindu festival of colors—a special observance of good over evil. To learn more about Holi, [click here](#).

Putting Greatness into Action

As we look ahead to Practicing Excellence at Virtua, we invite you to take a look back at Virtua colleagues putting greatness into action in this month's [Wow-WE video](#)!

Examples include saving a man experiencing cardiac arrest at a restaurant; prioritizing wellness by joining the WE Thrive Virgin Pulse platform; continuing the dream of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and transforming health care through philanthropy. Click [here](#).