

## Clinician Update

### May 11, 2023

#### "We Ask Because We Care" Begins This Week

Virtua's brand promise is to be our patients' partner in health for what matters most by listening and connecting at every touch point. In order to be a true partner, it's important that we truly get to know them as distinct individuals.

Beginning this week, care teams at our hospitals and medical practices will ask each patient to provide information about their identity, background, and life experiences. Some of the questions may seem personal or unrelated to the reason for their visit. However, their responses will allow us to create a care plan that is specific for the individual. We also will be adhering to rules set by the State of New Jersey, which requires health systems to collect demographic information to better understand the needs of residents and help ensure all people have access to quality care.

**What will be asked?** We will ask the patient to provide information about their race, ethnicity, preferred language, sexual orientation, and more. We will also ask questions about their life and any hardships they may or may not be experiencing (such as the ability to afford groceries). In some cases, the answer to a question may seem obvious. We will ask the same questions for all patients, as it is never wise to make assumptions.

**Who will see and use this information?** Only the people who are directly involved in the patient's care can access this information. The data we provide to the state is aggregated and de-identified, meaning it is no longer traceable to them as an individual. Their privacy is important to us.

**What if the patient does not want to answer some or all of the questions?** It is the patient's decision to provide any/all information that they wish. If they are a MyChart user, they may have the opportunity to respond to these questions remotely on their own time.

#### Important Masking Update, Effective Today

Dear Colleagues,

Today, the United States marks the end of the official public health emergency around COVID-19. On a similar note, the World Health Organization announced last week that COVID-19 no longer constitutes a global health emergency.

Therefore, effective today, Virtua colleagues, patients, and visitors are **no longer required to wear masks** in our hospitals, physician offices, and ambulatory care locations, **except when interacting with patients in the following circumstances:**

- Patient has a suspected or confirmed viral **respiratory infection**.

- Patient is undergoing **intensive immunosuppressive therapy** used to treat uncontrolled rheumatologic or other autoimmune and malignant diseases. Examples include: *transplant patients, refractory lupus or angiitis, untreated HIV disease, or congenital immunodeficiency syndromes*.
- Patient received a **solid organ transplant** or a **stem cell transplant**, or had **graft-versus-host disease** within the past six months, or at the discretion of the managing physician.
- Patient received **intensive chemotherapy** and/or **radiation therapy** for treatment of hematologic malignancies, e.g., leukemia, lymphoma, myeloma, or another cancer treated with intensive chemotherapy within the past three months.
- Patient (or their family member) asks you to wear a mask in their patient room.

Respecting the mask-wearing of our colleagues, patients, and visitors is a top priority and we encourage continued use for those who still prefer it, especially those who are immunosuppressed. Should we notice an increase in community transmission rates of COVID-19 or any outbreaks in our facilities, our masking requirements may be updated again.

Additionally, effective today, the **COVID-19 Employee Hotline will discontinue operations**.

Any colleague with symptoms that may be attributed to COVID-19 or a similar illness is strongly encouraged to test for COVID-19 using a rapid antigen test (i.e., a home test) prior to reporting to work. Such symptoms include:

- A fever of 100°F or higher and/or chills without another known cause (i.e. urinary tract infection)
- New-onset cough
- New-onset sore throat
- New-onset sinus symptom

If a colleague tests positive for COVID, they must call out sick and report their positive result using the [online assessment tool](#) available on the Colleague Corner. **All positive COVID tests must be reported via this tool.** This will prompt the Return-to-Work team to contact you and develop a return-to-work plan based on the established criteria.

If a colleague chooses *not* to test for COVID, they may not work if they have a new-onset, persistent cough that has lasted for at least 24 hours or a fever higher than 100°F. The colleague may return to work once they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and/or their cough is no longer persistent (an occasional cough is acceptable).

Colleagues with any respiratory symptoms (apart from those related to a chronic condition – such as asthma) must wear a mask at work for as long as those symptoms persist.

We are all happy that we have reached this point in this challenging journey. Your health and well-being and that of your families, our patients, and the members of our community are of the highest importance.

Sincerely,

Reg Blaber, MD, MBA, FACC  
EVP & Chief Clinical Officer

## Happy Hospital Week!

### *A Message from President and CEO Dennis Pullin*

Hospital Week (May 8 to 14) is upon us, and we are thrilled to recognize and share our appreciation to all Virtua Health colleagues for being Here for Good! The national theme for Hospital Week is, “We Are Health Care: Caring for Patients, Strengthening Communities.”

President and CEO Dennis Pullin shared this [audio recording](#) to staff. Here is an excerpt:

*“Our individual efforts shape the way people perceive and experience all of us. There is incredible power in that, and I hope our journey with Practicing Excellence is helping you to feel purposeful, connected, and focused on bringing your best to every encounter. As an expression of our appreciation for all that you do, please join us at one of next week’s Hospital Week celebrations.”*

The dates and locations are listed below for the colleague gatherings at Virtua hospitals. Details will be shared by site leadership.

Virtua Medical Group colleagues and those based in other locations are invited to attend a celebration at the nearest Virtua hospital. Colleagues at other locations, such as the Virtua Health & Wellness Centers in Berlin and Camden and select corporate offices, will celebrate at their locations.

Note: If you require a Kosher or Halal meal, please speak with a member of the cafeteria staff.

**Virtua Marlton Hospital** — Tuesday, May 16

**Virtua Mount Holly Hospital** — Tuesday, May 16

**Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital** — Tuesday, May 16

**Virtua Willingboro Hospital** — Wednesday, May 17

**Virtua Voorhees Hospital** — Thursday, May 18

## The 2023 *Philadelphia Magazine* Top Doctors List Is Here

Congratulations to the more than 100 Virtua and Virtua-affiliated physicians to appear on the 2023 *Philadelphia Magazine* Top Doctors list. A spot on this list signifies trust and standing in the region, in part because the individuals recognized are nominated by their peers. [Click here](#) to consult the list, where you can search "Virtua" to browse the honorees among us.

## Top Physicians 2023 – *South Jersey Magazine*

In its August issue, *South Jersey Magazine* will highlight those physicians as voted by the public that have made an impact on the lives of people in our area. Each person can vote one time per day [here](#). Entries must be received by June 2.

[Here is the publication's Top Physicians, 2022.](#)

## Practicing Excellence at Virtua

Our *Practicing Excellence* journey continues at Virtua Health! Click to view the [Week 6](#) and [Week 7](#) guides to view, try, and share Practicing Excellence tips with your teams.

This week, teams will focus on one of several compelling topics based on their learning track. Topics include *Conveying Respect, Communicating at the Bedside, Respecting Patients, Building Team Trust, Creating Patient Confidence, and Building Rapport.*

Thank you to practice manager Bonnie Matis for sharing her own tip of Practicing Excellence. Bonnie said:

*"I rely on a weekly re-occurrence on my calendar to log in—whether it's on the app or website—and complete the assigned tip. It doesn't take long. The foundation of this program is amazing and has the potential to give us all the boosts that we need from health care burnout. Let's support and motivate each other through this."*

To share your team's best practices and success with the program, email [virtuainfo@virtua.org](mailto:virtuainfo@virtua.org) and they could be featured in an upcoming *Clinician Update*.

To access the weekly guides and additional resources, visit the [Practicing Excellence page](#) on the Colleague Corner.

## Virtua Orthopedic Surgeon Co-Authors Article Evaluating Patient Resilience and Outcome

Recovering from injuries, such as ACL surgeries, involves more than just a physical component. A patient's personal resiliency, identified as the ability to bounce back from adversity, can have a profound effect on outcome. That is the finding published in an article co-authored by Virtua Orthopedics and Spine surgeon Sean McMillan DO, FAOAO.

The [article](#), published by *The Journal of Arthroscopy, Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation* on behalf of the Arthroscopy Association of North America, reports on the study evaluating the relationship between patient resilience and patient-reported outcome measures after primary anterior cruciate ligament reconstruction. The findings make the case that the mental component cannot be overlooked.

“I believe moving forward, there will be a much heavier focus on the mental aspect of rehabilitation from injuries to help our young athletes return to the field in a better mental and physical state,” said Dr. McMillan. “It is why I strongly advocate for the interplay of mental and physical rehabilitation with our young athletes and believe this will be a growing trend amongst our colleagues.”

This study also won first prize at the Ortho Summit 2022 resident section. To read it, [click here](#).

## Mark Your Calendar: Quarterly Cardiology Grand Rounds, June 21

### *The New HF Guidelines: What We All Need to Know*

Back in March, Virtua Cardiology initiated a Grand Rounds series for clinicians. The next program in the virtual series will highlight the new heart failure guidelines we all need to know. It will take place on Wednesday, June 21 at 7 a.m. and will feature Sabra Lewsey, MD, MPH, a cardiologist specializing in heart failure and assistant professor of medicine at Johns Hopkins Medicine. She completed her residency in internal medicine at The Johns Hopkins Hospital, where she also completed fellowships in cardiology, advanced heart failure, and transplant cardiology.

Virtua Health designated this live medical education activity for a maximum of 1.0 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™. [You can register here](#) or go to the Virtua Learning System (VLS) and search for the title. To learn more [view the flyer](#). Be sure to mark your calendars for future sessions on September 20 and December 20. Details to come.

## Now Available: Refer Grateful Patients in Qliq and Epic

Through [The Lasting Impact Project](#), Virtua’s philanthropy team works with our physicians and clinical teams to help facilitate expressions of gratitude. Many of our patients and their loved ones want to say “thank you” for the excellent care they receive by sharing their story or making a philanthropic gift. In fact, last year more than 50 clinicians, colleagues, and care teams were honored with a gift of gratitude. These gifts have a ripple effect of good, helping to fund various initiatives at Virtua that aid our patients and community members in need.

Here are two easy ways to refer your grateful patients to Virtua’s philanthropy team:

- Qliq to @Meghan Walsh
- On Epic enter keyword “Gratitude” into your referral orders

You can also email [gratitude@virtua.org](mailto:gratitude@virtua.org) or call 856-355-0830. A member of our philanthropy team will then be in touch to have a confidential conversation with you about your patient’s desire to express gratitude.

Learn more about the power of gratitude from your fellow physicians and see some of our patient gratitude stories at [virtua.org/gratitude](http://virtua.org/gratitude).

## Report Suspicious Emails to the Virtua I.T. Team

To protect Virtua Health and your fellow colleagues from the risks of fraudulent emails, the Virtua Information Technology (IT) team issues this important reminder to immediately report suspicious emails by clicking on the *Report Phish* icon or *Report Suspicious* button in Outlook. Please do not delete the suspicious email (real or simulated) because reporting the email will help raise awareness and prevent other colleagues from clicking on it. The Virtua IT team will respond to your report and will either confirm the phishing attempt or deem the email as safe.

If you have further questions or need guidance, please email [securityawareness@virtua.org](mailto:securityawareness@virtua.org).

## In the Community

Virtua Urgent Care recently supported the Haddon Township Health & Wellness Festival, offering blood pressure checks and raising awareness about our urgent care centers throughout South Jersey, including their newest location in Mullica Hill. Meanwhile, in Pennsauken, the VirtuAsia and community health/NJ CEED teams educated and connected with community members about the importance of cancer screenings at the Asian American Pacific Islander Festival.

## IDEA – Inclusion, Diversity and Equity for All

On May 17, people around the world will acknowledge [International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia](#) to celebrate sexual orientation and gender diverse populations. The date was chosen to commemorate the declassification of homosexuality as a mental disorder in 1990 by the World Health Organization.

In 2009, a petition from groups representing more than 75 countries recommended adding transphobia to the observance. The theme for this year is [“Together Always: United in Diversity.”](#) As advances are made around the world for LGBTQ+ people, so too, are discriminatory laws, practices, and movements.

Become an ally and learn more about the challenges faced and the ways we can be united in diversity by joining the OUT at Virtua Colleague Community. Email [OUT@virtua.org](mailto:OUT@virtua.org).

Additionally, May is Asian American Pacific Islander Month. Virtua and the VirtuAsia Colleague Community recognize the contributions and influence of Asian Americans and Pacific Islander Americans to the history, culture, and achievements of the United States.

## Check Out Our Celebratory Wow-WE Video

This Hospital Week, we celebrate the achievements and dedication of those who continue to make a positive impact in our community. In the latest Wow-WE video, [view captivating clips](#) from various events that showcase the remarkable work of our colleagues.

From Doctors' Day to the Our Lady of Lourdes School of Nursing graduation to the launch of our Mobile Health & Cancer Screening Unit, our teams inspire, uplift, and remind us of all the good at Virtua. [Check out the highlights!](#)