

Clinician Update

May 12, 2022

Virtua Dealing with Global Shortage of Iodinated Contrast Agents

Health care systems and imaging sites across the globe are experiencing a shortage of iodinated contrast agents used for radiologic studies and cardiac/neurologic diagnostics. The problem arose after a COVID-19 lockdown temporarily shut down a production facility in Shanghai. The facility has now reopened, but because of resultant backups, shortages are expected to last for about six weeks.

In a memo sent this week, Vice President for Surgical Practice and Outcomes Howard Winter, MD, identified how Virtua is taking the appropriate steps to conserve the supply of iodinated contrast that is currently available. He noted that Virtua will continue to monitor the shortage and search for additional supply of the iodinated contrast agents and offered that our radiologists can be helpful in seeking alternatives to iodinated contrast.

Dr. Winter outlined how Virtua will conserve its supply for truly emergent and urgent cases and instituted conservation measures:

In-Hospital Radiology Departments

- No CT scans with contrast will be performed. For abdominal exams, an oral contrast will be used (which may be barium or iodine contrast depending on the urgency of the exam).
- CTA PE can be performed with the avoidance of CTA in low pre-test probability patients.
- All other CTA exams should be performed with MRA as an alternative strategy (thoracic and abdominal aorta, runoff, non-time critical neurovascular exams).
- All elective outpatient CT scans with contrast will be either (a) converted to CT without IV contrast after the approval of the ordering doctor, or (b) rescheduled for later if the patient can wait, or (c) converted to an alternate imaging study such as US or MR.
- For GI bleeds, nuclear scan is to be used—not CTA.
- CTA stroke studies should be limited to those cases where time-critical thrombectomy or thrombolysis is a viable treatment approach.

In-Hospital Procedural Areas (OR, Endo, IR, Cath & EP Labs)

- In general, non-urgent procedures needing iodinated contrast should be delayed until the supply improves. Examples include: angiography and coronary interventions, endovascular procedures, and urologic procedures requiring contrast. *Urgent or emergency procedures requiring iodinated contrast should go forward without delay.* This decision will be based on the clinical judgment of individual surgeons and proceduralists, who we trust will make good decisions based on the current circumstance. Proceduralists should prioritize their urgent cases and delay others.
- As we successfully navigated similar shortages during previous COVID-19 surges, surgical and interventional schedules will be examined by local administration and medical directors. If necessary, they will contact proceduralists to request that some procedures be postponed.

We thank all for their support and good judgement during what we hope to be a temporary situation. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact Dr. Winter (856-495-3841) or Dr. Craig Zaretsky, vice president for clinical operations (surgery) at (856-701-4285) with questions. With your help, we know we will prevail.

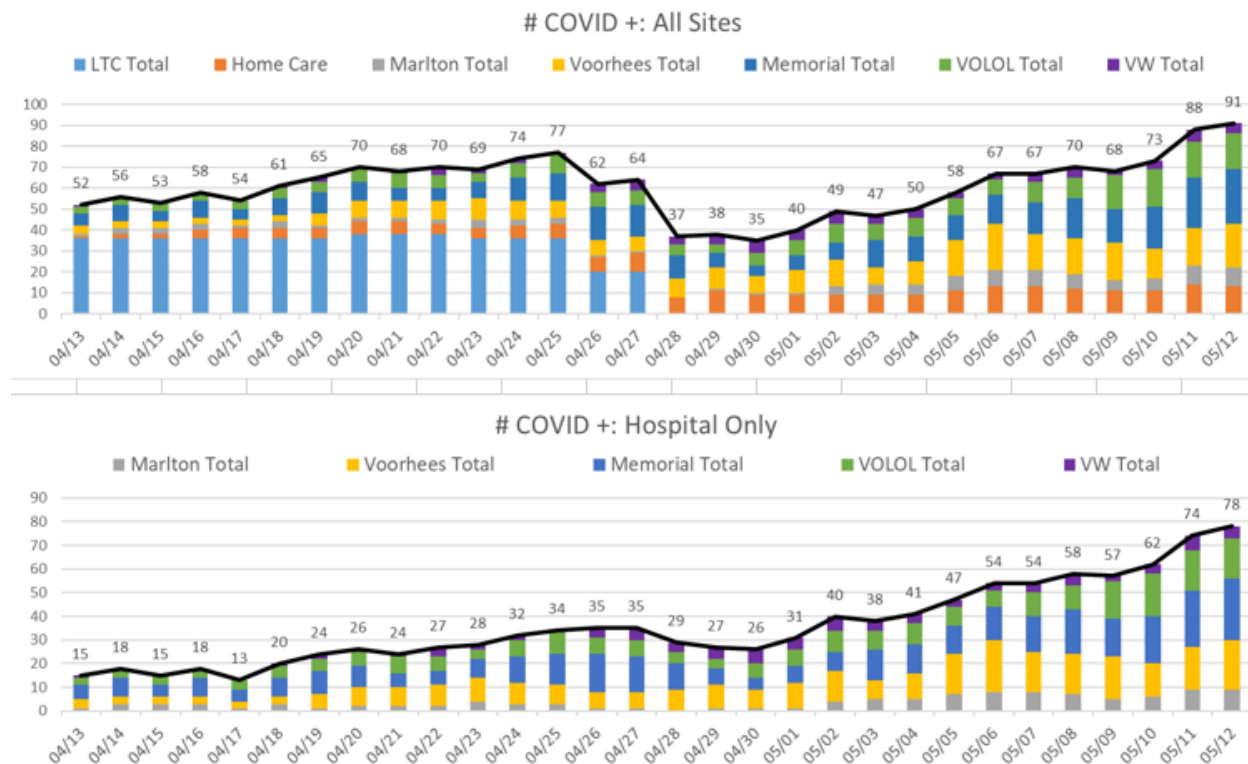
Addressing Long COVID

The CDC has provided updated resources on “long COVID.” While the science around long COVID grows, the CDC states that it is found more often in those who had severe COVID illness, those who were not vaccinated, or those with certain underlying conditions. Racial and ethnic disparities may also be a factor. The [CDC Long COVID web page](#) includes links to [emerging research](#) about long COVID and resources for health care providers.

At Virtua specifically, our **Care After COVID** program offers a dedicated service to treat and support community members through an initial virtual visit and follow up medical evaluation, and coordination of referrals to services such as specialty care, social work, and physical therapy. Patients who’ve had COVID-19 symptoms for 30 days or more can call **856-325-3200**. Virtua social workers manage a monthly [online support group](#) and [Facebook group](#) to help patients connect with others on a similar journey.

In related news, [a new study](#) has identified cognitive deficits associated with severe COVID illness. The study, appearing in the journal *eClinicalMedicine*, found cognitive deficits equivalent to a decline of 10 IQ points that persisted at least six months after contracting the virus. The report calls for longer term monitoring and support for patients recovering from severe COVID.

COVID-19 Census



Latest COVID-19 Fast Facts

- The latest rate of transmission in New Jersey was reported Tuesday as 1.22.

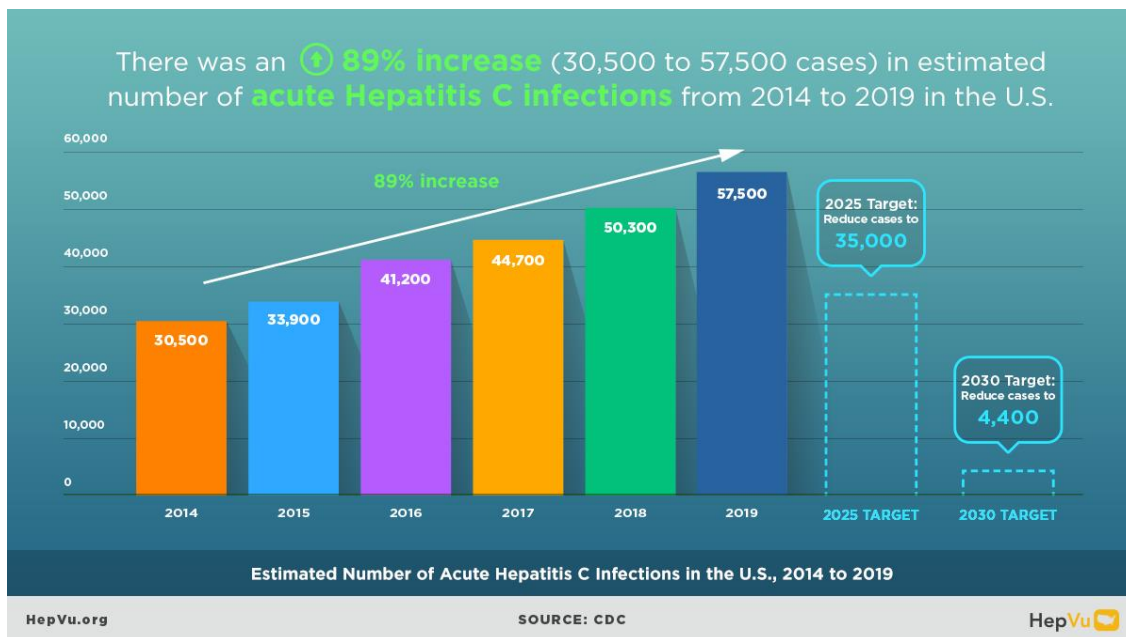
- The total number of cases reported as of 3 p.m. today:
 - Atlantic County 56,149 cases
 - Burlington County: 86,785 cases
 - Camden County: 107,428 cases
 - Gloucester County: 56,028 cases
- COVID-associated mortality for Camden, Burlington, Gloucester, and Atlantic counties: 4,621.
- The state’s Vaccination Overview dashboard reported 17,678,595 doses of vaccine have been administered.

Virtua Launches Effort to Increase Hepatitis C Testing

With cases of acute hepatitis C infections on the rise due to the opioid epidemic, and in alignment with the new CDC guidelines as well as the World Health Organization goal to eradicate the virus by 2030, Virtua has initiated a new Epic “health maintenance topic” that prompts primary care providers to screen at least one time all patients 18 and older for hep C, regardless of risk factors. Any patient with ongoing risk factors should have their hepatitis C antibody checked yearly.

Previously, only baby boomers—those born between 1945 and 1965—were targeted for screening. However, with opioid addictions often leading to intravenous drug use, a broader (and younger) population is now considered at risk. “For every patient we are able to diagnose and cure, we prevent 20 additional cases, so testing is critical,” said Virtua hepatologist Hisham ElGenaidi, MD.

Direct-acting antivirals used for treating hepatitis C have an incredibly high success rate with few side effects—curing up to 98% of all patients. Treating and curing hepatitis C can prevent progression to liver cirrhosis, liver cancer, and the need for a liver transplant.



Virtua EP Lab Publishes Case Study

Congratulations to Virtua's Heart Rhythm team on [publishing a case study](#) involving a patient with long-standing persistent atrial fibrillation and inducible mitral annular atrial flutter. The team successfully employed ethanol infusion within the Vein of Marshall to terminate refractory flutter. The article appeared in this month's *EP Lab Digest*.

National Hospital Week: Together for Good

Hospital Week (**May 8 to 14**) is upon us, and we are thrilled to celebrate all Virtua Health colleagues by bringing back the Hospital Week picnics at select Virtua locations during the **week of May 16**. This year's theme is *Together for Good*, which was conceived by our 303 Lippincott Drive/Howard Boulevard RISE Team.

All colleagues are invited to join in the fun, connect with fellow colleagues, and share a meal. The dates, times, and locations for the picnics at the Virtua hospitals are listed below.

Colleagues at other locations, such as the Virtua Health & Wellness Centers in Berlin and Camden, Virtua Medical Group offices, and select corporate offices, will celebrate at their locations. Additional details will be available in your campus *Monday Morning Minutes* or via email invitation.

Note: Colleagues based in other locations are invited to attend the picnic at the nearest Virtua hospital.

Virtua Mount Holly Hospital

Tuesday, May 17

11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

7:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital

Tuesday, May 17

11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Wednesday, May 18

12 midnight to 2 a.m.

Virtua Willingboro Hospital

Wednesday, May 18

11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

7:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Virtua Marlton Hospital (Physician's Parking Lot, South Side)

Wednesday, May 18

11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

10 p.m. to 12 midnight

Virtua Voorhees Hospital (Outside of the Cafeteria)

Thursday, May 19

11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

10 p.m. to 12 midnight

Additionally, to honor Virtua colleagues, we will showcase a series of advertisements online and in the print publications *South Jersey Times* and *Trenton Times*. These adorable kids are also featured in this [short video](#) that will be shared on Virtua's social media channels.

Top Docs Surveys

- Click to [nominate a SJ Magazine Top Doc](#) by **tomorrow, Friday, May 13**. If you are a physician, [click here](#) and include your license number. The results will be posted in the magazine's September 2022 issue.
- Click to [nominate a South Jersey Magazine Top Physician](#). (Despite similar names, this is a different publication than the one above.) Each person can vote one time per day through **Tuesday, May 17**. The results will be published in the fall.

Virtua in the News

- **Virtua Expert Recommends Precautions as COVID Cases Rise**—Case counts are up in the last two weeks across the tristate area, including a 67% jump in New Jersey. Virtua's five hospitals have also seen a substantial increase in COVID patients recently, according to Dr. Martin Topiel, infection control officer. He urges people to get vaccinated and boosted, and to take precautions such as masking and social distancing—especially around those at high risk from COVID-19. Watch and read on [6 ABC](#).
- **Virtua among 150 Top Places to Work in Health Care**—Becker's Healthcare has included Virtua on its 2022 list of the nation's best places to work in our industry. The list highlights health care organizations that promote diversity within the workforce, employee engagement, professional growth, and other key attributes. Read in [Becker's Hospital Review](#).
- **Virtua Voorhees Hospital Earns Highest Grade for Patient Safety**—Virtua Voorhees is one of 30 New Jersey hospitals to receive an "A" grade in The Leapfrog Group's spring Safety Report. The grades indicate hospitals' ability to prevent harm to patients, based on 22 measures of patient safety, according to Leapfrog, a national not-for-profit organization. Read in [ROI-NJ](#).

Together, WE are Transforming Health Care through Philanthropy!

We are pleased to share our *2021 Impact of Giving Report – Transforming Health Care through Philanthropy*, and know that you will be inspired when you read about the remarkable impact our generous donors and caring colleagues helped create last year.

Our caring colleagues' commitment to our Culture of WE is remarkable. In 2021, 1,228 colleagues, including every senior leader, supported our colleague giving campaign, [Give for Good](#).

Together through philanthropy, we were able to support a range of programs and services that make a difference for our patients, community, and colleagues. Thanks to the support of our donors:

- **4,414 children** received free development and health screenings by the Pediatric Mobile Services team
- **31 nurses and students** were awarded nursing scholarships
- **26,839 times Eat Well** supported people with healthy food
- **89 Virtua colleagues** supported through the Colleague Care Fund
- **1,184 free cancer screenings** provided to residents of Burlington and Camden counties

View our donors' impact at GiveToVirtua.org/impact.

Good Food to Grow

In collaboration with Virtua Eat Well, Virtua Philanthropy, Food Trust, and Rowan University, Virtua Pediatric Mobile Services provided nutritious food to young children at four Child Development Centers in Camden City through its Good Food to Grow program.

On May 2, the Pediatric Mobile Services team filled 177 brightly colored, reusable backpacks with five pounds of fresh produce, a recipe book for kids in English and in Spanish, and \$8 in Food Bucks (that can be used aboard Virtua's Eat Well vehicles and corner stores and some supermarkets in Camden). The team delivered the backpacks to the Mi Casita South and Mi Casita East day care centers.

The Good Food to Grow program is supported by a grant from St. Elizabeth's Mission Society. The mission of Good Food to Grow is to provide easy access to healthy fruits and vegetables and to teach the importance of good nutrition and meal preparation to local families.

Update to Occurrence Reporting Tool on the VINE

As we navigate through our journey to being a High Reliability Organization, Virtua is fully committed to the transparency of all safety events, precursors and near misses, and unusual occurrences. We report these events with the intent of investigating, finding, and correcting vulnerabilities within systems to improve care and patient safety.

In anticipation of a new federal law regarding transparency of violence, Virtua will update the "Employee Event" and "Safety/Security" occurrence forms on the VINE to appropriately capture the type of violence being reported. Effective Monday, May 16, the updated forms will be available. Visit the homepage of the VINE and click on [Occurrence Reporting](#).

Cycling for Care

May 14, 8:30 a.m.

Check out the [great videos featuring Virtua physicians](#) who'll be riding this Sunday in support of the Cherry Hill Free Clinic. You are invited to ride through the farms and low-rolling hills of Burlington County in this year's Cycling for Care event. The rider registration fee is \$50 and proceeds go toward providing access to primary care for uninsured members of our community. Click to [register for the event](#).

End to End Telehealth: Everything You Need to Know to Excel in a Telehealth Encounter

June 21, 6 to 7 p.m.

"End to End Telehealth" will feature speaker Dr. Angela Skrzyński. The target audience for this session is Virtua Medical Group clinicians. Virtua designates this continuing medical education activity for a maximum of 1.0 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits. Click to [view the flyer](#).

Camp Oasis 2022

June 5, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Enrollment is open for Camp Oasis! This free, adventure-filled day in June is for local children (ages 8 to 17) who have a parent or loved one with cancer. It includes all the fun activities of summer, while making connections with other kids who share similar concerns. The camp is sponsored by the Penn Medicine | Virtua Cancer Program and generous donors. To learn more, please contact Jackie Miller at 856-247-7386 or jmiller@virtua.org. The registration deadline is **Sunday, May 15**. Click to [view the brochure](#).