

Clinician Update
May 26, 2022

Virtua Recognizes Memorial Day 2022

Memorial Day signifies something far more than the start of summer. To help us appreciate the meaning of the holiday, Virtua asked a handful of colleagues who are military veterans to provide their reflections. Please take a moment to [view this video](#), read their words, and think of those who lost their lives in service to our country.

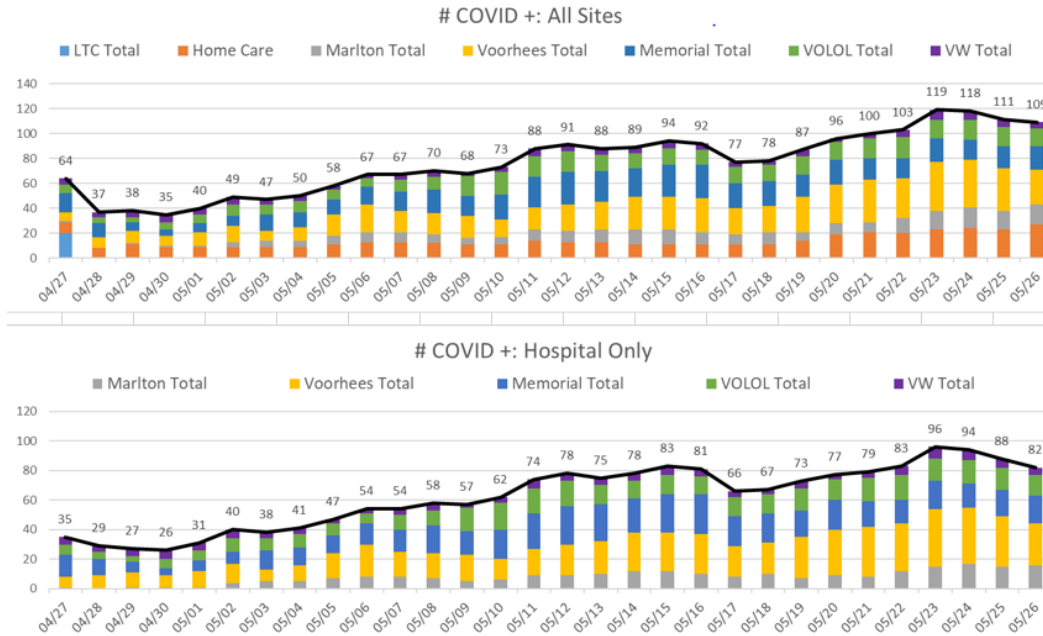
New Guidelines in the Perioperative Management of Patients Treated with SGLT-2 Inhibitors

An increasing number of patients with diabetes, heart failure, or renal failure are being prescribed medications in the SGLT inhibitor family. When these medications are continued in the immediate preoperative setting, they may be associated with postoperative diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA). The FDA has issued a statement advising them to be held before surgery.

Earlier this week, Howard Winter, MD, vice president for surgical practice and outcomes, sent a notice to Virtua clinicians sharing new guidelines regarding SGLT inhibitors. A multidisciplinary team from anesthesia, endocrinology, and pharmacy at Penn developed the guidelines, which may have minor modifications in the future, for the perioperative management of these medications. In an effort to implement them as soon as possible, *Clinician Update* is sharing those guidelines again [here](#) so to reinforce the communication to all physicians.

The document lists the medications of concern. Please note that these medications need to be held 3 to 4 days preoperatively depending on the drug before elective surgery. Emergent surgery, which will of course not be delayed, will require specific postoperative monitoring, and consultation of the hospitalist/endocrinology service. Thank you for your help with implementing these guidelines as we strive to provide the safest care possible for our patients.

COVID-19 Census



Latest COVID-19 Fast Facts

- The latest rate of transmission in New Jersey was reported on Tuesday as 1.1.
- The total number of cases reported as of 3 p.m. today:
 - Atlantic County 57,531 cases
 - Burlington County: 89,621 cases
 - Camden County: 110,197 cases
 - Gloucester County: 57,336 cases
- COVID-associated mortality for Camden, Burlington, Gloucester, and Atlantic counties: 4,651.
- The state’s Vaccination Overview dashboard reported 17,842,653 doses of vaccine have been administered.

CDC: Long COVID Research Findings

The [CDC reports](#) that one in five COVID survivors ages 18 to 64 experienced post-COVID conditions often associated with “long COVID.” Reports of patients who experience persistent symptoms or organ dysfunction after acute COVID continue to rise, the CDC stated. The study was based on EHR data on 26 conditions consistent with long COVID, including neurologic conditions, cardiovascular conditions, kidney failure, respiratory conditions, musculoskeletal conditions, and blood clots and vascular issues. COVID-19 survivors had twice the risk for developing pulmonary embolism or respiratory conditions, the study showed.

As you well know, COVID-19 can be challenging both physically and emotionally. Virtua's COVID-19 support group is helping those with ongoing physical and emotional challenges, and persons with long COVID are most welcome. The group is peer-led and supported by Virtua social workers, and offers a safe, compassionate place to share, connect, and have meaningful conversations about your journey. For more information, click [here](#).

Virtua Earns National Accreditation for Rectal Cancer Program

Virtua is one of only 50 programs in the country to earn accreditation from the National Accreditation Program for Rectal Cancer (NAPRC), a quality program of the American College of Surgeons. This accreditation recognizes Virtua's exceptional standards for program management, advanced clinical services, and quality improvement for patients.

The multidisciplinary rectal cancer team includes representatives from surgery, pathology, radiology, radiation oncology, medical oncology, and the cancer program. Congratulations to Dr. Avi Galler and Susan Van Loon, who led the initiative, and all of the Virtua colleagues who contributed to the multi-year process that led to Virtua achieving this important recognition for clinical excellence.

Virtua's program includes multimodality surgical therapies with advanced laparoscopic and robotic techniques for the treatment of rectal cancer. Additional multidisciplinary case conferences, carcinoembryonic antigen (CEA) testing, MRI, and CT imaging for cancer staging, which allow patients to start treatment within a defined timeframe. Rectal cancer programs accredited by the NAPRC undergo a site visit every three years.

Dennis Pullin Shares the Good on "To Care is Human" Podcast

Virtua President and CEO Dennis W. Pullin was recently a guest on The Beryl Institute's podcast "To Care is Human," where he shared how Virtua is striving to make good things happen for *Everybody Always*.

He talks about how Virtua colleagues continue to show up with empathy and respect during this continuing pandemic, and the importance of listening and learning so that we can make informed decisions around elevating the experience we provide to our staff, our patients, and the community we serve. It's a *Hello Good* conversation that will hopefully make you feel proud to be a member of the Virtua family. [You can catch it here.](#)

Philly Mag's Top Docs of 2022 — Out Now!

Congratulations to the more than 120 physicians from Virtua Medical Group and Virtua Integrated Network selected for *Philadelphia* magazine's Top Docs list. The print edition is available on newsstands, and you can also [consult the online directory](#). These physicians brilliantly represent themselves, their profession, and Virtua, and we are grateful for their collective efforts to help our community *be well, get well, and stay well*.

Looking ahead, the polling is already open for next year's *Philadelphia Magazine* Top Docs issue and will remain so through later in the fall. The magazine partners with health care researcher Castle Connolly to create a list of top doctors rated by physicians who can vote [here](#) any time of the year. It is open to all licensed physicians in America who are able to nominate physicians in any medical specialty and in any part of the country. The poll does not accept self-nominations nor any duplicate nominations of the same physician per calendar year. Nominations may be submitted all at once or throughout the year.

Processing and Responding to Emotionally Charged Events

The unspeakable events at Tops Friendly Market in Buffalo, NY, and Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, TX, just a few days later are senseless tragedies with heartbreaking consequences. These events can be difficult to process or discuss with your loved ones. People may experience a variety of emotions: shock, sorrow, numbness, fear, anger, disillusionment, grief, and many others. You may find that you have trouble sleeping, concentrating, eating, or remembering even simple tasks.

We want to stress that you are not alone. Through Virtua's partnership with Carebridge, our employee assistance program, colleagues and family members have access to:

- Confidential counseling 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling **800-437-0911**
- Virtual support groups; participants can remain anonymous
- Additional resources on myliferesource.com, access code: Y6EXA

Additionally, Carebridge encourages colleagues to download and share the following articles:

- [Managing Your Distress in the Aftermath of a Shooting](#)
- [Talking to Your Children About Violence](#)
- [Tips for Talking with Children & Youth After a Traumatic Event](#)

Persevere and trust in your ability to get through challenging days by exploring these resources and connecting with colleagues and loved ones. We can all help, lean, and learn from one another.

Virtua Introduces Break the Glass Initiative

Virtua is committed to safeguarding the privacy and security of all patients' personal health information (PHI). This includes protecting the PHI of colleagues who receive care at Virtua facilities. To further enhance colleague privacy and address any concerns regarding who can access their medical records, Virtua will launch the Break the Glass initiative on **Tuesday, June 28**.

Break the Glass is an additional privacy functionality in Epic. It places security checks on the patient records of colleagues to ensure that only the appropriate users have access to the information they contain. It is commonly used by organizations that utilize Epic, including Penn Medicine and Jefferson Health. It helps safeguard protected health information and supports HIPAA and other privacy and security regulations. When an Epic user attempts to access the electronic medical record of another Virtua colleague, that person will receive an alert. The alert requires the colleague to verify that they are accessing the record for a legitimate, job-related purpose. This is known as "breaking the glass."

To learn more about Break the Glass, the process, and how to take the steps needed, [click here](#) on the Vine under Virtua News.

Safety Question of the Week: Workplace Violence Reporting

As we continue our journey toward regulatory readiness, we are committed to providing a safe environment for our patients, visitors, and colleagues. This week's *Safety Question of the Week* focuses on workplace violence.

There has been an exponential increase of workplace violence due to the pandemic over the past two years. A successful approach to evaluating the effectiveness of a workplace violence prevention program requires worksite analysis. Environmental modifications are then implemented based on the findings from the analysis. With best practices, laws, and regulations constantly evolving, hospitals must review the program's policies and procedures, training, and education materials for consistency with the latest recommendations.

Due to the increase in violence in health care facilities, new regulations and standards have been released that require additional resources and more specific reporting of workplace violence occurrences. Here are some talking points for your staff:

- An update to RL Solutions was needed to capture data.
- View the updated forms on the homepage of the VINE; click on [Occurrence Reporting](#).
- Virtua is required to develop a Workplace Violence Plan and implement interventions to prevent and mitigate occurrences of workplace violence in the future.
- We need to evaluate data and demonstrate actions based on the data collected.
- Over time, the expectation is that we have improved performance based on data collected.
- The additional regulations are meant to provide a safer environment for our patients and colleagues.

Patient safety must be top of mind for all of us. We need to model those HRO behaviors for our staff. A safety-first culture starts with leadership and accountability.

Virtua in the News

- **Eat Well Program Offers Access Healthy, Affordable Food**
Virtua marked the 5th anniversary of its Eat Well food access program, which launched in 2017 with a year-round Mobile Farmers Market. Today, the program also features a 40-foot Mobile Grocery Store and two “Food Farmacies.” These initiatives are reducing food insecurity across South Jersey, and lowering risks of diet-related chronic diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease. Watch on [NJ Spotlight News](#).
- **Virtua Named a Top U.S. Health Care Brand**
A new national report ranks Virtua Health among the nation’s top 50 health system brands. Additionally, Virtua is ranked highest of all health systems in Philadelphia and the South Jersey region. The study, titled “Humanizing Brand Experience,” is considered the most comprehensive brand report in the industry. Chrisie Scott, Virtua’s chief marketing officer, said the research provides a better understanding of what motivates consumers’ choices and loyalty. Read in [ROI-NJ](#).
- **Virtua Voorhees Hospital Recognized as a Top Maternity Hospital**
Newsweek has named Virtua Voorhees Hospital as one of America’s Best Maternity Hospitals. The list includes 350 hospitals nationwide, eight of which are in New Jersey. Virtua Voorhees received five ribbons—the highest performance level—highlighting the hospital’s commitment to safety, outcomes, and personalized care. Read in [Newsweek](#) and [CNB News](#).

OUT at Virtua Participating in Haddon Township Pride

The OUT at Virtua Colleague Community will participate in the upcoming Haddon Township Pride Parade, and all Virtua colleagues are invited to join in the festivities. The event, now in its second year, will be held on **Thursday, June 9**, from 6 to 10 p.m.

The parade concludes with an outdoor "block party" that features music, entertainment, and refreshments. To receive email updates on ways to get involved—including where and when the OUT Community is gathering before the parade—please complete this [sign-up form](#).

May Is Asian American Pacific Islander Month

As we approach the end of May and Asian American Pacific Islander month, Dr. Dan Choi, VP of clinical operations for cardiology, shares his thoughts and experiences as a Korean American born in Seoul, South Korea:

“Many Asians who live in the United States have either left or fled their home countries to seek peace and better opportunities. However, their conservative ideas of family and society stay rooted despite the change in environment.

“As a Korean American, I am very familiar with the concept of honoring our elders, sacrificing for the younger generation, and prioritizing the whole rather than the individual. Interestingly, this cultural context can contrast one's desire for ultimate freedom and the pursuit of fulfillment in America.

“My wife, Monica, and her parents, Eddie and Marisal Santiago, are from the Philippines. Monica and I have three girls: Justine, Hannah, and Natalie. Justine married her husband, Dave, a few years ago.

“We are a living example of blending cultures, ideas, and people—as Asians, as Americans. We have thrived for so long in this world by being proud of our history and roots, but also embracing and celebrating inclusion and new opportunity.

“Being Asian American, to me, means that I am from the old looking toward a new future.”

Upcoming Events

COVID-19 Emotional Support Group

Third Monday of each month, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

COVID-19 can be challenging—both physically and emotionally. If you or a loved one is facing ongoing challenges caused by COVID-19 and are interested in group support, join online Virtua's COVID-19 support group. Peer-led and supported by Virtua social workers, this group offers a safe, compassionate place for you to share, connect, and have meaningful conversations about your journey. People with "long COVID" are welcome. Click to [view the flyer](#).

Technology-Enabled Care Virtual Conference

Oct. 22, 7:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Save the Date for “Maximizing the Technology Toolkit,” a free virtual conference that includes a technology and clinical track, podium presentations, exhibit hall, and poster presentations. The conference is open to all Virtua colleagues, especially providers, clinicians, allied health professionals, and leaders in ambulatory and inpatient clinical areas. Click to [view the flyer](#).

Patients Helping Patients, in Honor of a Caring Physician

When three patients make gifts in honor of one physician within two months, it is notable—and that's exactly what has happened at Virtua Health this spring. Carole Vernon, Joseph Gross, and one anonymous donor each made gifts in honor of their oncologist, Dr. Seth Berk. They shared kind words about Dr. Berk and the way he provides care with compassion, and explained their desire to give back to help other patients who are also going through treatment.

Carole writes, “Dr. Berk is the most humble, compassionate, caring doctor, and has changed my life. Our family is so grateful and thankful for you.”

Adding to the praise, Joseph says that Dr. Berk is “excellent at putting his patients at ease and building their confidence.”

Dr. Berk has responded to these tributes with gratitude:

“I hold the strong belief that no individual should be denied the opportunity to receive medical care due to financial or social obstacles. I feel fortunate to work within a health care system that embraces its responsibility to help all members of our community, and I am grateful for the support provided by my patients to help other individuals overcome some of these challenges.”

How inspiring! We are proud to recognize Dr. Berk as a Lasting Impact Project honoree for 2022.

Visit virtua.org/gratitude to learn more about how we invite our community to make a lasting impact through philanthropy.