

Clinician Update

Nov. 11, 2021

Thanking Our Veterans

Today is Veterans Day, a federal holiday observed annually on Nov. 11 to honor military veterans. While we are encouraged to thank veterans throughout the year, Veterans Day is a particularly poignant time to show our appreciation for these heroic men and women who answered the call to service. Many are our fellow colleagues at Virtua, and we cannot thank them enough for their service.

Virtua and 92.5 WXTU are honoring our local military with the Wall of Heroes, encouraging listeners through Sunday, Nov. 14 to post a picture of their military loved one on a [dedicated landing page](#).

And, as a way of gratitude and being Here for Good, Virtua is proud to offer enhanced accessibility to health care for the military through our Here to Serve program. This multidisciplinary program includes a dedicated personal health navigator who coordinates care for both veterans and active military members, particularly those stationed at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in Burlington County.

Because medical testing and approvals can affect deployment scheduling and status, Here to Serve provides expedited access to specialty care, supplementing the services already available on base. Specifically, [Virtua Health & Wellness Center - New Hanover](#) provides advanced medical imaging and physical therapy—and is conveniently located less than a mile from the base.

“Our military heroes and their families have always been there to serve our nation. It’s important that we, in turn, serve them by providing personalized, easy-to-access medical care,” said Dr. Reg Blaber, EVP and chief clinical officer at Virtua.

Dr. Blaber has a deep connection with the military, having served as an internist in the U.S. Army for six years and achieving the rank of major while working at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Fort Benning, and Fort Meade.

“To our military heroes—active duty, retired, and your families—you’ve always been ready to serve our nation,” he said. “And we’re here to serve you by delivering a personalized health experience that’s effective, efficient, and readily available.”

To access Here to Serve, call 833-676-7677 or email heretoserve@virtua.org. For more details, visit virtua.org/HeretoServe.

Virtua and Rowan to Partner on Education, Research, and Patient Care

Good news travels quickly, and the region is buzzing after Tuesday’s announcement that Virtua and Rowan are working toward a new affiliation agreement that will expand and enhance educational and career opportunities in the area.

[In an audio message sent earlier this week](#), Virtua President & CEO Dennis W. Pullin noted, “Our vision is bold and our aim is high. We intend to meaningfully advance health care in New Jersey. The plan is for Virtua and Rowan to affiliate for clinical education, research, and clinical activities related to Rowan’s School of Osteopathic Medicine, School of Nursing and Health Professions, and the School of Translational Biomedical Engineering and Sciences, among other programs.”

You can also read news articles about the announcement on the websites of the [Philadelphia Business Journal](#) and [NJBiz](#).

A First in Nation by Virtua

Clinical Trial Advances Treatment for Leading Cause of Cardiac Arrest

The cardiac team at Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital recently became the first in the nation to implant an investigational defibrillation lead designed to treat people with ventricular tachycardia (VT).

Virtua is one of 47 hospitals worldwide participating in a clinical trial called Lead Evaluation for Defibrillation and Reliability (LEADR). The LEADR study, sponsored by Medtronic, will evaluate the safety and effectiveness of an investigational, catheter-delivered lead in adult patients who have previously experienced, or are at significant risk of developing, VT. The lead is paired with commercially available Medtronic defibrillators.

“By participating in the LEADR study, we are helping drive patient care forward,” said Virtua heart rhythm specialist Aatish Garg, MD, who performed the first procedure with Darius Sholevar, MD, Virtua chief of electrophysiology and principal investigator.

The investigational lead is 1.6 millimeters in diameter, which means that it takes up less space in the veins compared to commercially available leads that are implanted with ICDs today.

“One of the issues we encounter with the larger leads used in ICDs is that the scar tissue that builds up around them over time can cause the veins in which they are inserted to become occluded,” said Dr. Sholevar. “This investigational lead is thinner.”

In order to continue to provide the best possible care to our patients, Virtua Health system remains committed to outstanding quality care and ongoing clinical research.

“Research is a critical part of cutting edge care in medicine,” said Dr. Sholevar. “In the Virtua Health System, the hard and diligent work of the research physicians and coordinators give our patients access to novel therapies that would not otherwise have been available.”

[Click here to read an NJBIZ article](#) on the topic. For more information about the LEADR study and potential enrollment, please contact Marisa Brown, study primary coordinator, at mbrown3@virtua.org.

Webinar for Operation Allies Welcome

On Monday, Nov. 15 at 1 p.m., Dr. Hosai Todd Hesham will host a one-hour Zoom webinar to provide recommendations and practical tips for how to best care for the Afghan evacuees residing at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst. This is an opportunity to broaden our cultural competency, engage in open dialogue, and live by our Guiding Principles. Details are below.

Join ZoomGov Meeting

<https://ushr.zoomgov.com/j/1609768280?pwd=ZlNmZWZlWQs9VS20zbHcrWjhhZjFDdz09#success>

Meeting ID: 160 976 8280

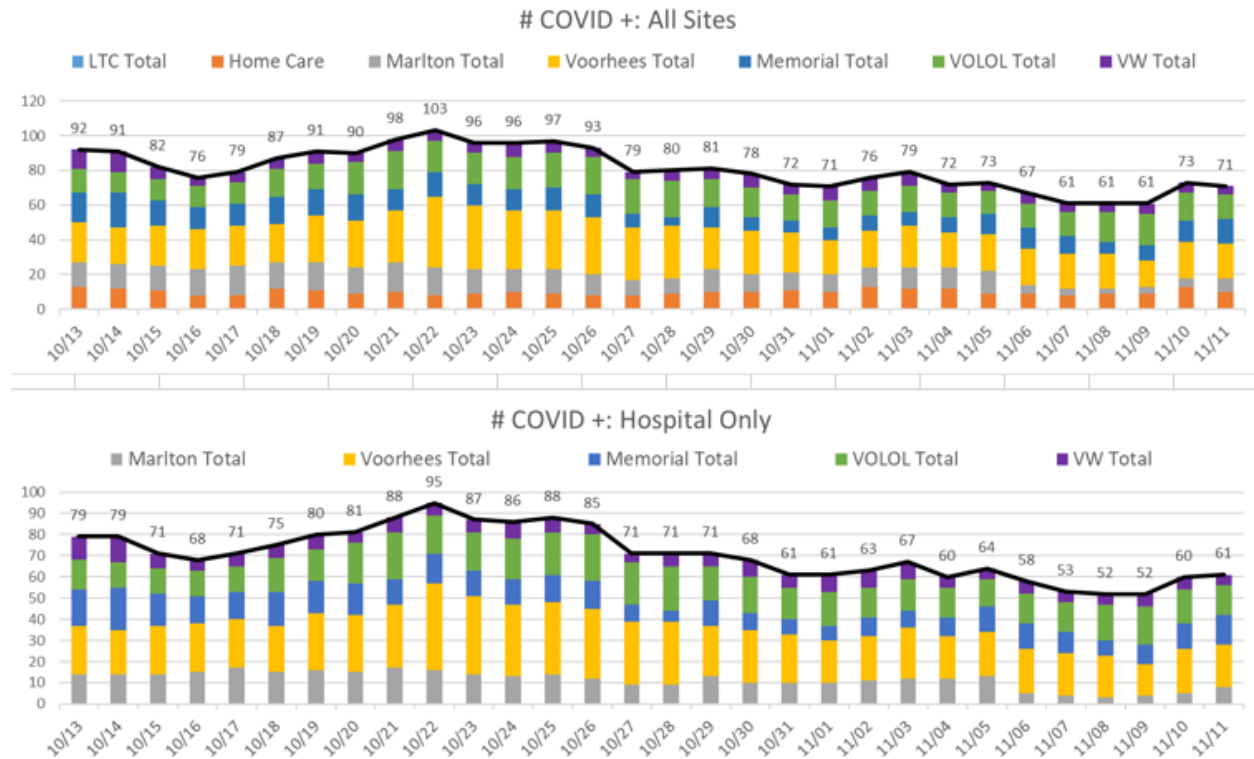
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COVID-19 Census



Latest COVID-19 Fast Facts

- The statewide rate of transmission remained 0.97 for the second straight day.
- The total number of cases as of 3 p.m. are as follows:
 - Burlington County: 47,051 cases
 - Camden County: 59,829 cases
 - Gloucester County: 33,209 cases
- COVID-associated mortality for Camden, Burlington, and Gloucester counties: 2,921.
- The state's Vaccination Overview dashboard reports 12,906,341 doses of vaccine have been administered.

Europe is Back at the Epicenter of the Pandemic

WHO Urges Americans to Take Note

According to a [New York Times](#) report, the World Health Organization (WHO) said Europe is again experiencing near-record levels of coronavirus cases, and could experience 500,000 COVID-related deaths in the next three months.

Dr. Hans Kluge, WHO's director for the 53 countries in its European region, said there were 1.8 million

new cases and about 24,000 deaths in the past week.

“We are at another critical point of pandemic resurgence,” Dr. Kluge said. “Europe is back at the epicenter of the pandemic—where we were one year ago.”

Dr. Kluge said the virus was surging because precautions like mask-wearing were relaxed and too few people have been vaccinated. Hospital admission rates were high, he said, in the countries where vaccination rates were low.

Dr. Kluge told [CBS News](#) that Americans should be paying close attention to the situation in Europe right now—and taking lessons from it. He said, "The basic principle is, if there is a situation where the peak is accelerating, don't wait" to bring back anti-virus measures, and "the earlier, the stricter, the better."

Final Call for COVID-19 Vaccinations at the HEC

Before the month is over, the state and its partners will open a new Burlington County COVID-19 Vaccine Mega-Site in Mount Laurel. As with the Moorestown mega-site, Virtua will proudly serve as the health care lead for this forthcoming facility.

In order to staff and support the mega-site, Virtua will discontinue its vaccine clinic at the Barry D. Brown Health Education Center (HEC). **Next week is the final opportunity for Virtua colleagues and their children/dependents to receive the COVID-19 vaccine at that location.**

The dates are as follows:

- Tuesday, Nov. 16: Moderna boosters
- Wednesday, Nov. 17: Pfizer boosters
- Friday, Nov. 19: Pediatric Pfizer doses (for the children/dependents of Virtua colleagues ages 5 to 11)

Note: Virtua invites eligible colleagues who received their initial vaccine series at the original mega-site to schedule a booster appointment at the HEC. These individuals can email covidmegasite@virtua.org with their name and cell phone number to request an appointment between 8 a.m. and 1:45 p.m.

As always, colleagues should bring their CDC-issued vaccine record card to their booster appointment. All visitors to the HEC, including children, must wear a mask throughout their visit.

Update to Virtua’s Visitation Policy

Virtua has now resumed limited visitation in its emergency departments. Please note the following details:

- Visitation is limited to one guest per patient. Patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 may not have a visitor.
- Exemptions to the visitation policy exist for pediatric patients, those with physical or cognitive disabilities, or individuals requiring end-of-life care.
- All visitors must participate in COVID-19 screening protocols and must wear a mask at all times.
- Administration reserves the right to suspend visitation due to patient volume or other operational considerations.

Click to view [Virtua’s visitation policy](#).

Virtua Holds First VirtuAsia Event

On Tuesday, the VirtuAsia Colleague Community held its first event, “VirtuAsia: Unity in Diversity,” in which its members led honest and authentic discussions about the importance of raising awareness about Asian culture to combat aggression and unconscious bias.

Liny Joseph, chairperson of VirtuAsia, said, “We would like to thank everyone who participated and shared their voices and personal experiences with us. It is our hope to continue hosting events to further these important discussions, support our Asian American and Pacific Islander community, and share the beauty of Asian culture.”

Participants from the event shared the following comments:

“SUCH a fantastic event and conversation! You all did an amazing job—such great energy and even better conversation. Can’t wait for the next one!”

“Great job tonight... Thank you for sharing your culture with us. Looking forward to learning and helping.”

“It was a great session tonight! It was eye opening to hear some of their experiences and thoughts. Please let me know how I can be more involved.”

[View this video](#) to learn more about VirtuAsia, and stay tuned for upcoming events in 2022.

Virtua Recognizes National Radiologic Technology Week

National Radiologic Technology Week is celebrated to recognize the vital work of radiologic technologists across the nation. The celebration takes place during the week of Nov. 8 to commemorate the discovery of the X-ray by Wilhelm Conrad Roentgen on Nov. 8, 1895.

The week-long celebration calls attention to the important role that medical imaging and radiation therapy professionals play in patient care and health care safety. This year’s theme is “Essential Together.”

Thank you to all our radiologic technologists across Virtua for your professionalism, dedication, and care that you give to our patients. We loudly applaud you this week and each and every day. You are truly essential to the success of Virtua.

Why I Give for Good: Reflections from Russ Hansel

We are grateful to Russ Hansel, VP of mission and ministry, for sharing his thoughts on why participating in the Give for Good philanthropy campaign is so important to him, and how a bike ride one fateful morning in 2015 made a big difference in his life. Click to [read Russ’ reflections](#).

- Thank you to the more than 550 colleagues who have already joined Russ in participating in Give for Good this year! If you are still considering your participation, know that you can have a lasting impact. Together, our gifts make a tremendous difference for our patients, each other, and the community we serve!
- To learn more and make your gift, click “Give for Good” on the [VINE](#) or visit GiveToVirtua.org/Colleagues.