

## Clinician Update

November 12, 2020

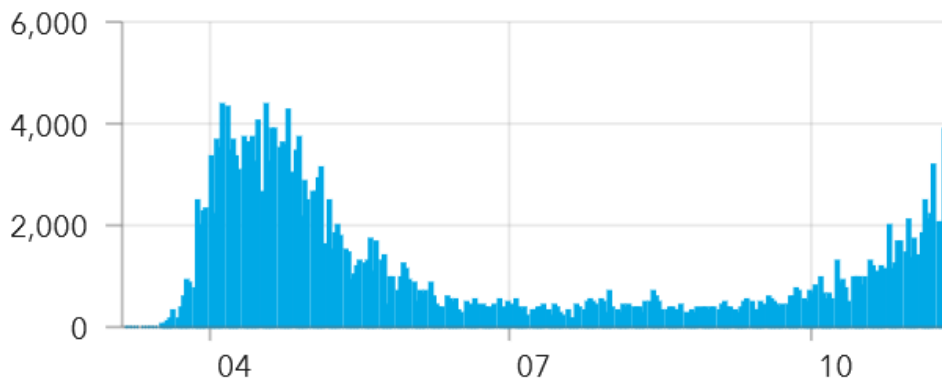
### A Message from Dr. Reg Blaber and Dr. Martin Topiel

Fellow Clinicians,

As we are sure you are aware, COVID-19 infections are once again on the rise throughout our hospitals and the region. Last week, Camden County had the highest spot positivity rate in New Jersey. Burlington County was very high as well. At Virtua today, we have 165 COVID-positive patients in our system, with 146 of them inpatients in our acute care hospitals.

The following graph demonstrates the rising infection rate across the state, which are quickly reaching numbers seen last spring.

### New Cases Over Time



Most cases can be categorized as community exposures, brought on by gatherings of family and friends and relaxed vigilance in safety precautions. With the high prevalence of COVID infections in our region, we are also seeing a dramatic increase in infections among our Virtua colleagues. We have more than 200 colleagues in quarantine.

As you work with your staffs, continue to share that it is imperative that we all be vigilant. When we are at work, we must be mindful of how we use PPE. We must also wear a mask at all times, stay six feet apart, wash our hands, and wear eye protection for all patient encounters. Lunch and break-room encounters should be distanced and/or staggered since our masks are often off. Most exposures at Virtua occur in these break settings because we let our guard down.

As trusted clinicians for the community, continue to use your influence to communicate with friends, neighbors, and others to make smart decisions at home. As the holiday season approaches, so does the understandable tendency to want to enjoy time with friends and family. As emotionally taxing as it is, the best way we can demonstrate our affection and friendship is to remain physically apart from one another and to continue masking when within six feet of those outside one's household. Our patients look to us for advice and counsel, and this is a good time to be an influencer of safe behavior.

As difficult as the months ahead will likely be, there is good news to share.

- Our intensivists tell us that the mortality rate of those who get COVID is much better than last spring. There are several possible causes for this. First, it seems that those who are most vulnerable have been careful to protect themselves against contracting the virus. Thus, across the country, the average age of those infected is lower than last spring. Another important contributor to improved survival is that we now have more experience treating the illness, and have better tools at our disposal.
- Virtua is involved in multiple national trials that give us access to the newest therapies. At the same time, we are using previously novel therapies like Vapotherm to effectively administer oxygen noninvasively.
- The possibility of an effective vaccine announced Monday gives us hope that we can return to some normalcy as early as next summer – provided we can be vigilant through the fall and winter.

We are prepared to take on this next surge. However, this will be a marathon, not a sprint.

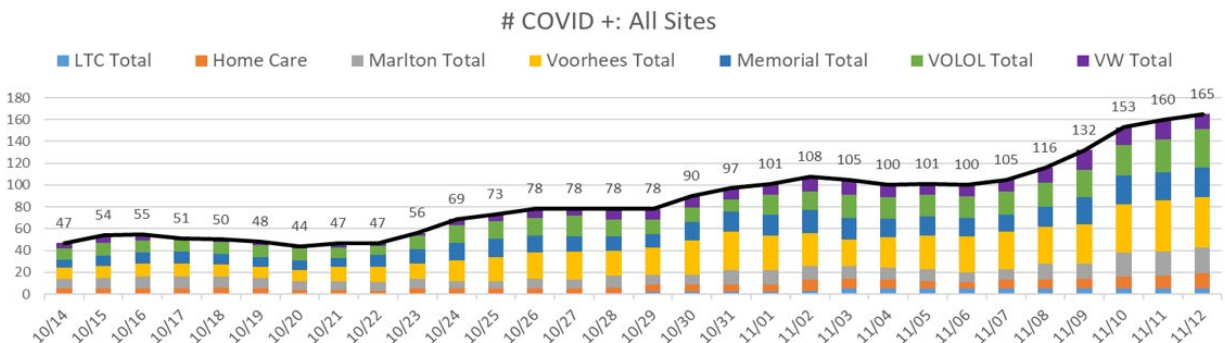
We are so thankful for your courage and your compassion for our patients and each other. Indeed, heroes do work here.

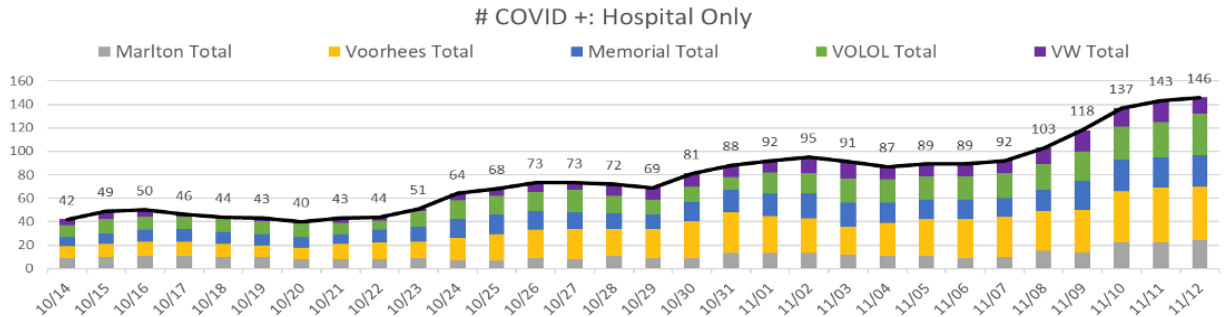
Stay safe. Stay well. We can do this together.

Dr. Reg Blaber and Dr. Martin Topiel

### By the Numbers

The following charts reflect the latest figures for Virtua-site cases of COVID-19, telling a story consistent with regional trends.





### Fast Facts

The rate of transmission in New Jersey is currently at 1.3. Locally, in the tri-county area, there have been a total of 1,318 confirmed deaths, as of 1 p.m. today. The state also reports “probable” deaths from COVID-19, with figures shared separately on the [state dashboard](#). For the three counties, probable deaths would account for an additional 101 fatalities.

The total number of cases are as follows:

- Burlington County 9,858
- Camden County 13,913
- Gloucester County 6,608

### Virtua Health Administers More Than 50,000 Coronavirus Tests

Yesterday, **Nov. 11**, Virtua Health administered its 50,000<sup>th</sup> outpatient COVID-19 test. Testing has been offered at a number of locations since March, including Marlton, Camden, Moorestown, Voorhees, and Willingboro.

“This is really a remarkable feat considering the first site on Lippincott Drive in Marlton was conceived of, designed, and opened in just a matter of days,” says Dr. Reg Blaber, Executive Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer. “Time and again, our colleagues have responded to the needs of so many different communities with incredible agility, efficiency, and professionalism. In short, you made something extremely complex seem really easy. Congratulations!”

### COVID-19 Resources

We encourage all clinicians to stay informed about Virtua and New Jersey’s efforts to combat the coronavirus and keep our fellow colleagues and community members safe and healthy. Refer to the following online resources for updated and approved information regarding COVID-19.

- For Virtua Medical Group physicians, the [Coronavirus Resource Center](#) on the VINE provides messages from Virtua leadership; clinical videos; updates from Virtua Human Resources; wellness and technology resources; all issues of the Coronavirus Update newsletter; and links to reputable health care and government organizations.
- For Virtua’s affiliated physicians, take advantage of the [Coronavirus Update](#) resource found on [DIGITAL 411, Virtua’s clinician information center](#).

- The [My-EOP mobile application](#) offers many of Virtua's emergency response plans, emergency contact information, incident specific action plans, and incident command system forms and documents.
- The New Jersey Department of Health offers an [online COVID-19 Alert NJ Community Toolkit](#), including fact sheets, posters, and social media content. And, as we noted in last week's issue, here are directions to download the state's [COVID Alert NJ app to check-in to the state's contact tracing and exposure alert system](#).
- If you want to follow meaningful colleague discussions and share in the many ways the community is showing their support, as well as see how fellow colleagues are rising to the call across Virtua and throughout the community, join Virtua's Colleague Facebook Group, by clicking [here](#).

### **Urgent Care Patient Visits Online and In-Person**

Throughout the pandemic, Virtua has been rigorous in adapting protocols and services to minimize risk of exposure to Covid-19. Hospital, surgery center, and office visits will continue with strict safety measures, and telehealth visits are offered as a trusted complement or alternative to on-site care. Research shows that patients appreciate the option of telehealth, and as cases and anxiety rise, we expect telehealth usage to climb. Throughout the past months, we've improved our processes to ensure that patients have a short line to care from providers they know and trust. Virtua Urgent Care is providing telehealth visits for a wide range of conditions, from earaches to UTIs to specialized consults for coronavirus. All telehealth Urgent Care visits are documented in Epic, with detailed notes shared back to patients' providers.

Patients can start an urgent care telehealth visit [here](#).

### **Digital Transformation Office Formed**

Recognizing that the delivery of care is fundamentally tied to its population health and consumer engagement strategies, Virtua Health is creating an Office of Digital Transformation to be led by Tarun Kapoor, MD, SVP for Clinical Integration. Dr. Kapoor is currently the president of VPP and will step down to run the DTO. The new office will be responsible for meeting our commitment to digital transformation – developing Virtua's digital front door and streamlining access to care for consumers, as well as supporting VIN through its use of Epic's Healthy Planet population health management module.

### **VIN Leadership Team**

Recently, we announced the formation of Virtua Integrated Network (VIN), our new clinically integrated network that will formally launch in January 2021. This new organization, which combines the best practices of VirtuaPhysicianPartners (VPP) and LHS Health Network (LHSHN), will have a new leadership team.

Donna Antenucci, RN, BSN, Vice President of Clinically Integrated Network Operations and President of LHS Health Network, will become Vice President of Virtua's Clinically Integrated Network and President of VIN. Over the last year, Donna has worked on the integration of VPP and LHSHN. In addition, she most recently led a six-month pilot MSSP program that achieved

\$3.6 million in shared savings for LSHSN, with the second-highest percent savings achieved for the state of New Jersey.

Andrew Cohen, MD, who currently holds the position of medical director for VPP, will assume the lead physician role for VIN where he will manage the day-to-day operations of the network. Andy has been with Virtua Health for 12 years as a family practice physician and has served as medical director of Integrated Care Management (ICM). He will be leveraging his clinical and ICM experience, and passion for population health, to improve the health and well-being of our employees and their families.

## **Virtua in the News**

Journalists often turn to Virtua for important information and highlight our exceptional services and colleagues. Here are some recent examples:

**Statewide magazine honors ‘Unsung Heroes’ of the pandemic:** *ROI-NJ* published a special issue recognizing health care workers who helped New Jersey survive the first wave of COVID-19. Among the honorees are five Virtua colleagues – one from each hospital – and Virtua President and CEO Dennis W. Pullin, FACHE. Read more [here](#).

**Military veteran offers hope to women with triple negative breast cancer:** Although Pam Carpino’s cancer journey is not yet complete, she is seeking to help other women with breast cancer. Carpino’s surgeon, Dr. Michelle Shen of Virtua, believes her patient will provide excellent support to others, and is optimistic about Carpino’s future. Read more [here](#).

**Virtua CEO interviewed on The Health Management Academy’s podcast:** Dennis W. Pullin, FACHE, appeared on the Academy’s “Fireside Chat” podcast to discuss telemedicine, purposeful leadership, and Virtua’s commitment to address the social determinants of health. Listen or read [here](#).

**Virtua says it’s more prepared for influx of COVID-19 patients from second wave:** Dr. Reg Blaber, Virtua’s chief clinical officer, provided his insights on KYW Newsradio and on Fox29. He noted improved treatment protocols and safety advances in all Virtua hospitals, while encouraging everyone to avoid large, indoor gatherings this holiday season. [Listen and read here](#), and [see his Fox29 interview here](#).

## **Help Your Community by Giving Blood**

We invite you to join Virtua colleagues by helping the American Red Cross maintain a sufficient blood supply. The Red Cross will host several blood drives at various Virtua locations in the days ahead, including:

### **Friday, Nov. 20**

Virtua Voorhees Hospital, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

### **Friday, Nov. 27**

Virtua Memorial Hospital, 6:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

### **Monday, Nov. 30**

303 Lippincott Drive, Marlton, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

**Monday, Dec. 14**

Virtua Health & Wellness Center – Moorestown, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Red Cross continues to take additional measures to ensure the safety of its donors and recipients. These include donor temperature screenings, additional screening questions, enhanced disinfecting, and social distancing, among other tactics.

It is quick and easy to sign up for our blood drives. Appointments are preferred. Click [here](#) to sign up and use sponsor code Virtua.

**Annual Mandatory Conflict of Interest Disclosure Available on Virtua Works**

The deadline to complete the Conflict of Interest has been extended to this ***Monday, November 16***. All Virtua-employed health care providers (physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants), and colleagues (who are director level and above) are required to complete the annual Conflict of Interest Disclosure Attestation.

The Conflict of Interest Disclosure Attestation is available on the home page of Virtua Works. Please click on the Compliance announcement. Questions and comments are welcome. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ryan Peoples, Compliance Manager (856-355-0729) or Raquel Ravelo, Corporate Compliance Auditor (856-355-0792).

**Congratulations, Virtua Ambulatory Surgery Centers**

Virtua is proud to announce that Virtua's Ambulatory Surgery Centers (ASC) were honored in *Newsweek's* 2021 America's Best Ambulatory Surgery Centers list. This compilation spotlights the 400 best centers in the 25 states that have the most facilities.

Eight Virtua facilities were among the top 15 ASCs in New Jersey and 12 facilities were among the top 25 statewide. The survey experts assessed quality of care, performance data, and peer recommendations relative to in-state competition. They also took into account how well facilities were responding to the threat of COVID-19.

"Congratulations to the Ambulatory Surgery Center teams," says Barry Graf, SVP of Partnerships and Business Development. "This honor clearly reflects the exceptional work of our incredible colleagues and clinicians who continue to support our ASCs. Thank you for your dedication. Let's continue to work together to maintain our exceptionally high standards."

Click [here](#) to view the list.