

Clinician Update

Wednesday, November 25, 2020

Joint Statement on Holiday Safety

A century ago, Americans weary of the 1918 Spanish influenza pandemic marked Thanksgiving with parades and parties. In some cities, throngs of people gathered in a ceremonial tossing away of their gauze facemasks, believing that they had survived the worst of the outbreak.

And what happened next? Influenza deaths skyrocketed in December, ending that deadly year with even greater losses.*

As we enter the 2020 holiday season, we cannot allow history to repeat itself. New COVID-19 cases are reaching nearly 4,000 daily, the highest levels in New Jersey since the peak last April. This is no time to let down our guard on the precautions that help keep us, and the people around us, safe.

For New Jersey's physicians, nurses and 140,000 employees of New Jersey hospitals, COVID-19 doesn't take a holiday. These selfless professionals are our greatest resource in fighting this pandemic, and they are irreplaceable. They serve on the pandemic's frontlines each day, through Diwali, Thanksgiving, Hannukah, Christmas, Kwanzaa and New Year's. And they too have parents, grandparents, children, and grandchildren who they long to celebrate with.

The very best way you can thank our health care heroes is to follow the personal precautions that can stop the spread of COVID-19. Keep your holiday events small – fewer than 10 people. Gather outdoors if possible. Social distance. Wear facemasks. Wash your hands frequently. And by all means, stay home if you are sick.

Good health is one of life's greatest blessings. Let's all show our gratitude to the men and women of New Jersey's health care community by doing what we can to help protect it.

Larry Downs, CEO, Medical Society of New Jersey

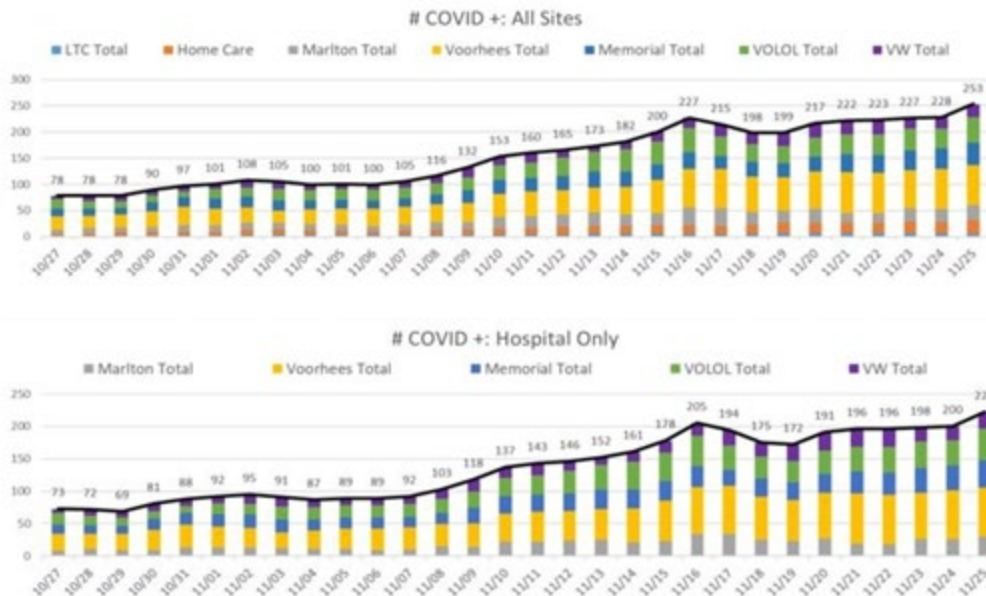
Cathy Bennett, president and CEO, New Jersey Hospital Association

Judith Schmidt, CEO, New Jersey State Nurses Association

* Philadelphia was especially hard hit. This historic period has been meticulously captured in a multimedia exhibition at Philadelphia's Mutter Museum of the College of Physicians, [Spit Spreads Death: The Influenza Pandemic of 1918-19 in Philadelphia](#).

By the Numbers

The following charts reflect the latest figures for Virtua-site cases of COVID-19.



Fast Facts

- The rate of transmission in New Jersey is currently at 1.24.
- Locally, in the tri-county area, there have been a total of 1,380 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 108 fatalities.
- Sadly, New Jersey’s fatalities have now exceeded 15,000 and today stand at 15,057
- The total number of cases are as follows:
 - Burlington County 12,817
 - Camden County 17,673
 - Gloucester County 8,406

Travel Advisory Update

Each week, the State of New Jersey updates its 14-day quarantine travel advisory. At present, nearly every state and U.S. jurisdiction meets the travel advisory criteria. Click [here](#) to view the complete list and additional details.

Virtua colleagues traveling to those states or traveling internationally are required to call the colleague hotline at 609-444-2828 upon return for guidance and return-to-work instructions. Colleagues who traveled to or from these areas, provided they are not exhibiting symptoms, will return to work. Should screening indicate that a 14-day period of self-monitoring is required before returning to work, colleagues may be required to use their own paid time off and/or may need to take time off on an unpaid basis if no paid time off is available.

Colleague travel to one of the listed states or jurisdictions is strongly discouraged to ensure the health and safety of you, your family, your fellow colleagues, and patients.

Questions About Testing?

We are sharing the following talking points in the event that friends and neighbors ask about COVID-19 testing options in the region.

Q: I'm planning to travel and/or visit with family. I don't have any reason to believe I have COVID-19 or have been exposed to it; I just want to get tested for peace-of-mind. Where should I go?

A: If you feel healthy, have no known exposures, and are pursuing a COVID-19 test strictly as a precaution, go to a [CVS COVID Testing Site](#) or check out [COVID Testing Sites in NJ](#). Virtua's Urgent Care centers are currently NOT testing individuals without symptoms and our emergency rooms are very busy with individuals who need urgent or critical care for many medical conditions, including COVID.

Q: I think I may have COVID. I don't feel terrible, but I don't feel my best either. Should I get tested?

A: Only your doctor can give true medical advice. Call your primary care office and speak with the care team about the next steps, including testing. They may even arrange for a telehealth visit so that you can be screened remotely without having to leave home. Some of Virtua's Urgent Care centers also offer COVID consultations.

Q: A member of my household may have been exposed to COVID-19. S/he feels fine and has no symptoms, so what should we do?

A: Call your family doctor and let them know the situation. If it's feasible and safe, you should consider having that person self-isolate within the home until you get more information from your care team.

Annual Virtua Thanksgiving Turkey Distribution

For the fourth consecutive year, Virtua colleagues celebrated Thanksgiving week by distributing more than 1,000 turkeys – and tote bags full of fresh produce – to families in our community. Thank you to all the donors, volunteers, and staff who pitched in to make this event a success.

Click to watch news-clips from the giveaway events in [Willingboro](#) and [Camden](#). For event photos, visit Virtua's [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages.

Reminder: 2020 Medical Staff Annual Meeting - Tuesday, Dec. 1 at 6 p.m.

This year's annual meeting will be held virtually for the combined medical staffs of Virtua Marlton, Virtua Memorial, and Virtua Voorhees Hospitals.

- The event will be hosted via Zoom by Jennifer Khelil, DO, MBA, SVP & Chief Medical Officer.
- The keynote welcome will be presented by Dennis Pullin, FACHE, President & CEO.
- Reginald Blaber, MD, MBA, FACC, Chief Clinical Officer, will provide a "State of the House."
- Campus updates will be delivered by John J. Kirby, OTR/MBA, SVP & Chief Operating Officer, Virtua Memorial Hospital and Paul E. Minnick DNP, RN, NEA-BC, FACHE, SVP & Chief Operating Officer, Virtua Voorhees Hospital / Virtua Marlton Hospital.
- Offering the President's Message and Awards Presentation will be medical staff presidents Rakesh Gupta, MD, and Shailen Shah, MD.

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://zoom.us/j/92542823092?pwd=QIJ4WTITaTR2UkdTTC9rS2lXbUVJUT09>

Passcode: 284158

Or iPhone one-tap :

US: +19292056099,,92542823092#,,,,,0#,,284158# or +13017158592,,92542823092#,,,,,0#,,284158#

Or Telephone, dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

US: +1 929 205 6099 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 312 626 6799 or +1 669 900 6833

or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 346 248 7799

Webinar ID: 925 4282 3092

Passcode: 284158

What Patients and Families are Saying About Virtua

Receiving safe care during the pandemic

Kindness is contagious and patients are eager to honor their caregivers online with meaningful expressions of gratitude. To date, Virtua Health has received more than 2,500 online reviews in 2020. In the spirit of Thanksgiving, today we share a gracious five-star review from Joseph C., a patient of the Virtua Samson Cancer Center:

Dr. Wilson and his entire team were absolutely terrific. They were beyond professional, which they all are! I can't say enough about the care and compassion I experienced throughout the course of my radiation treatment. Many, many thanks for all you did for me. I am very appreciative and thankful.

Gratitude goes a long way! Patients are more inspired than ever to shine a light on our teams for outstanding clinical care. Take a moment to encourage those who are especially grateful to leave a review on Google.

Virtua in the News

- **In South Jersey this holiday season, food insecurity is its own epidemic:** Virtua is helping to address this issue with our year-round Mobile Farmers Market and new Mobile Grocery Store. Read the *Courier-Post* story [here](#).
- **Pregnancy and the pandemic:** Health systems like Virtua are taking extra safety measures to protect moms and babies. Virtua OB/GYN Rachel Kramer, MD, offers facts and reassurance in this *South Jersey Magazine* story. Read [here](#).
- **Penn Medicine and Virtua Health extend alliance to 2023:** The collaboration, which began in 2015, enables South Jersey residents to access comprehensive care closer to home from a team of Penn and Virtua clinicians. Read this *Philadelphia Business Journal* story [here](#).

Honoring Health Care Heroes

As seen on *NBC Nightly News*, communities from across the country are paying tribute to the health care worker this holiday season. Even the world-famous Macy's display in New York City is rightly focused on celebrating "the heroes among us." [Watch the news segment here.](#)

If you see holiday displays in your hometown that honor health care workers, please share photos on the