

Clinician Update

Oct. 29, 2020

Breaking News on The Cures Act

In order to allow health organizations further flexibility and time to appropriately respond to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC) announced it has postponed the date for compliance with the Cures Act, which had been Monday, Nov. 2.

Yesterday, we delivered a special edition of *Clinician Update* devoted to the dramatic changes anticipated with the implementation of the 21st Century Cures Act. If you missed the issue, you can find it [here](#), along with other resources to help navigate the new requirements. Despite the postponement, we should all work now to understand and implement the requirements of the Act, in preparation for its eventual enactment. The above link will serve as a summary of what you need to know to get ready.

Virtua is committed to the intent of the Cures Act, that being to improve patient data exchange. We will be developing a timeline for implementation of the provisions, and will communicate further as the plans are finalized.

Also important to note, **the Nov. 2 deadline remains to update National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES) profiles**. The Cures Act requires physicians to update their digital contact information through the NPPES database. The goal is to create one source of truth for physician verification across the nation. Providers who fail to comply will be publicly reported, but more importantly, it is expected to impact quality incentive payments.

Virtua will update its employed physicians' profiles, but clinicians who are not part of Virtua Medical Group will need to complete this task or assign a staff member as a designee to contact the [NPPES](#).

All Virtua providers can check the Direct Address that Virtua currently lists for them via the [Vine](#) or [Digital411](#).

COVID-19 Corner

Coronavirus Update | Travel Advisory Update

On Oct. 27, the State of New Jersey updated its 14-day quarantine travel advisory. California and Massachusetts were added. In total, 41 states and U.S. jurisdictions meet 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 41 states and U.S. jurisdictions is strongly discouraged to ensure the health and safety of you, your family, your fellow colleagues, and patients.

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 continuing to trend upward, and is currently at 1.25.
- Locally, in the tri-county area, there have been a total of 1,294 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 8,486
 - Camden County 11,617
 - Gloucester County 5,559

Impending Cyber Threat to Health Care

You may have seen news reports about health care organizations whose systems have been infected with a specialized form of malware known as ransomware. Ransomware attacks can halt critical workflows until the organization either isolates the ransomware or pays a ransom to the attacker.

It is important that everyone stay extra vigilant and report suspicious email or activity as soon as possible. If you suspect your device has been infected with ransomware, turn it off or disconnect it from the network right away. The faster the device is taken off the network, the better our chances are at mitigating or minimizing the damage.

Ransomware

Ransomware encrypts files likely to have value to users or your organization, such as images and documents, and demands a ransom to decrypt those files. Generally, once ransomware has taken hold in a system, the only options are to pay the attackers or restore the files from backup copies, if they exist.

Attackers can attempt to install ransomware on machines using a variety of methods, including:

- Scanning for servers accessible on the Internet with unpatched vulnerabilities
- Getting users to open email attachments or click malicious links in email, also known as phishing
- Using exploits in web browsers and plug-ins or extensions to infect users visiting infected websites
- Uploading infected advertisements that unsuspecting websites then serve to the site's users.

Mitigating Controls

Prevention is the first and best response to ransomware. To help reduce the risk of a ransomware attacks at Virtua, we follow these information technology best practices:

- Limit administrative access where possible
- Maintain two different up-to-date anti-malware software solutions
- Implement a network intrusion detection/prevention solution
- Conduct regular vulnerability scanning to identify and address vulnerabilities
- Ensure devices are properly configured and that security features are enabled
- Monitor logs for suspicious activity
- Implement web filtering to block malicious websites
- Implement multifactor authentication for remote access and other applications where feasible
- Patch operating systems and keep software up to date
- Proactively monitor threat intelligence and update security solutions to block threats
- Implement a state-of-the-art email gateway security solution
- Educate our colleagues on detecting and reporting suspicious activity
- Back up systems daily
- Implement segmentation of vulnerable medical devices

A Salute to First Responders

This year's pandemic-related challenges have been unlike anything we have seen in our lifetimes. On **Oct. 28**, we recognized National First Responders Day by honoring the heroism and humanity of the individuals who are first on the scene in emergency situations. Take time to thank our paramedics, emergency medical technicians and emergency room teams, 9-1-1 operators, firefighters, police officers, security, and other first responders throughout our organization and community. Let them know how much we appreciate their commitment to serve others, and the amazing ways they have helped us all navigate these unprecedented times with their reliability, reassurance, dignity, and professionalism.

Annual Mandatory Conflict of Interest Disclosure Due Tomorrow

Virtua Health-employed health care providers (physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants) as well as colleagues (director level and above) are required to complete the annual Conflict of Interest Disclosure Attestation by **Friday, Oct. 30**.

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).

Tune in to a Special Virtual Performance from Musicians on Call

Musicians on Call, a volunteer organization that delivers the healing power of music to patients, will be hosting another virtual performance on **Thursday, Nov. 5** at 3 p.m. for patients at its member hospitals in the Philadelphia region, which includes Virtua hospitals.

We invite our hospital colleagues to share this link with patients and fellow colleagues. The 30-minute show will be broadcasted live on YouTube. Click [here](#) to view the flyer for more details. On Thursday, Nov. 5, click on this link https://youtu.be/gglt_5Ne_M4 to view the virtual musical performance.