

Clinician Update

October 10, 2024

Listen to an abbreviated [audio version](#) of this issue.

Thanks for Being a ‘Hero to Zero’

Yesterday, Virtua President and CEO Dennis Pullin sent a brief audio message about our relentless commitment to excellence, our dedication to being a high-reliability organization, and the ways each of us can be a guardian of trust for those we serve.

[Click here](#) to listen to Dennis’ audio message in its entirety.

Virtua’s Network of ASCs Grows to 42

Virtua recently welcomed Christiana Spine Ambulatory Surgery Center in Newark, Delaware, to its network of 42 ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs). Christiana Spine joins a network of surgery centers in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware—all state-of-the-art health care facilities that transform the outpatient experience and provide the highest caliber care for diagnostic and therapeutic procedures and surgery.

“Christiana Spine Ambulatory Surgery Center is an excellent ASC with a strong clinical team,” said Barry Graf, Virtua senior vice president of partnerships and business development. “We appreciate their trust in us as a partner, and we look forward to working together, sharing our knowledge, and combining efforts for continued growth in Delaware and the region.”

Virtua’s ASCs provide a safe and convenient alternative to hospital-based outpatient surgery with a strong track record of positive patient outcomes and satisfaction. This past spring, as reported [here](#), the inaugural edition of *U.S. News & World Report’s* “Best Ambulatory Surgery Centers” included eight of Virtua’s joint-venture ASCs.

Click [here](#) to see a map of all 42 ASCs in the Virtua network.

Virtua Expanding Expertise in Comprehensive Lung Care

The addition of thoracic surgeon Kim Shemanski, MD, to the pulmonary team at Virtua widens the scope of the extensive care we can provide for our community. Dr. Shemanski specializes in robotic-assisted approaches to pulmonary and foregut pathologies, expanding Virtua’s expertise in comprehensive lung care.

“Improving a patient’s quality of life is the most rewarding part of my job,” said Dr. Shemanski. “Whether it’s by removing cancer or helping them swallow better, the surgeries we perform have a significant, and often immediate, impact on a patient’s well-being.”

[Click here](#) to view a LinkedIn post about Dr. Shemanski’s arrival at Virtua.

Advanced Imaging Services Now Available Within Virtua Willingboro

Virtua Willingboro Hospital has opened a brand-new, full-service MRI suite. Located within the hospital, the suite provides improved accessibility and comfort to patients, colleagues, and the community. This new space allows the team to perform advanced imaging services, including MRI-conditional pacemakers. Its fast-scanning capability reduces the time required for certain procedures by half.

“Having this beautiful new MRI suite in the building allows us to better serve our community and provide care to our high acuity patients in critical care and the ICU,” said Kimberly Seal, radiology business operations director at Virtua.

[Click here](#) for more information.

Practicing Excellence Update

If you haven’t yet, remember to complete the Practicing Excellence Advanced Patient Experience Program. Click to [view the guide](#). For additional details about what is required, visit the [Practicing Excellence page](#) or email virtuainfo@virtua.org.

What Patients Are Saying About Our Clinicians

Confidence in care is a common reference among our clinician reviews. Note the following recent examples and how the patient felt about the experience, and the clinician referenced:

“Everyone was very nice and attentive. The doctor was great and knowledgeable. I will be returning. I highly recommend this doctor’s office. I loved coming to this place.” (Saadia Raza Rehman, DO)

“He is a wonderful doctor. From the minute I met him, I knew I could trust him with my care. He is informed, efficient, caring, and knowledgeable. I can't mention enough positive adjectives to describe him. I felt perfectly comfortable working with him, and I have referred other people to him as a result. I am so grateful that I met this gentleman.” (James A. Sanfilippo, MD)

“The entire experience was amazing. For the first time, I felt heard by a medical professional. It was a warm, personal experience. I couldn’t be happier that I made this appointment.” (Wyndham Pursley, APN)

“Dr. Healy is truly a blessing. His treatment has given me back my life. I am so thankful to him and his AMAZING staff!” (James P. Healy, DO)

“I had a wonderful appointment with Dr. Miles. I always do. She listens and takes care of my problems and is always on time. And it's just a pleasure. I just can't say enough good things about her. She really cares about my health and my well-being, and I really appreciate her.” (Liesl Miles, MD)

Deadline for *Philly Mag's* Top Docs of 2025 – Nov. 8

If you have a colleague who you'd like to see included in the **2025 Top Doctors issue of *Philadelphia Magazine***, now's your chance to make that happen. The magazine partners with health care researcher Castle Connolly to create a list of top doctors. Nominations are open year-long, but to make the deadline for consideration into the May 2025 Top Doctors issue, Castle Connolly has announced that the **nomination window will close Nov. 8.**

All licensed physicians in America can 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.

- Each calendar year, a physician may nominate: 15 in their own specialty, 7 each in Family Medicine/Internal Medicine/Pediatrics, and 5 in each of the remaining specialties.
- Helpful general info can be found [here](#).
- Physicians wishing to nominate someone can register here: <https://providers.castleconnolly.com/login>

Congratulations to the 100-plus physicians from Virtua Medical Group and Virtua Integrated Network who were selected for Philadelphia magazine's Top Docs list in 2024, which is listed [here](#).

Civic Engagement Can Improve Community Health

For most health care providers, political views are shaped by professional experiences as well as personal matters and beliefs. In a recent article in [Medpage Today](#), a med school student recalled providing emergency care for a patient who, for many years, struggled to afford his diabetes medication, which resulted in compounded care needs. The student could not help but wonder how things could have been different for her patient had access and affordability not loomed so large.

Health care is inherently political. The American Medical Association, the American College of Physicians, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services all recognize voting as [a social determinant of health](#).

According to a [July 2024 Statista study](#), 10% of voters in the United States named health care as the most important issue when voting, and an additional 8% specifically identified reproductive health. A

[Pew Research Center poll](#) from last month similarly cited health care as a key issue for voters, regardless of party affiliation.

For these reasons, many thought leaders and organizations encourage doctors to speak to their patients about the power of voting. [Andis Robeznieks](#), senior news writer for the American Medical Association, once wrote that “helping patients vote can be an effective public health measure on par with promoting seatbelt use or vaccinations.”

If you want to encourage voting but are unsure how to broach the topic, helpful resources include:

- **Vot-ER** is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that develops engagement tools and programs for clinicians. Its [website](#) has scripts, videos, and roleplay scenarios of how to discuss voting in a supportive, judgment-neutral way.
- **We Care, We Vote** is an American Hospital Association [webpage](#) offering tools, resources, and advocacy issues.

Should you wish to direct patients to reputable information, here are easy-to-remember websites:

- [Vote.org](#) provides links for registering to vote, checking one’s registration status, voting by mail, and signing up to receive election reminders.
- [NJ.gov](#) provides state-specific information, including polling locations, secure drop box locations, information for students and military members, and more.

The more engaged we are as a region and a state, the healthier we will be, according to the [Health and Democracy Index](#). In other words, when patients are empowered to elect representatives who advocate for their best interests, individuals and communities alike see improved health as a result.

So use your authority and trust as a doctor to encourage civic engagement! Voting is fundamental to our democracy, and you can help others exercise their right to be counted. If you engage your patients about the power of voting and have observations to share, please email virtuainfo@virtua.org.

Upcoming Events

Clinician Training for Woebot Mental Health Tool, Oct. 14

Woebot is a mental health app that Virtua has been utilizing with patients experiencing anxiety or depression in our primary care settings. If you have not been trained on Woebot, you are invited to attend a session **live on Teams on Monday, Oct. 14, from 5 to 5:30 p.m.** [Click here to join.](#)

To learn more about Woebot and its impact in the mental health space, view the latest episode of the “Here for Good” Podcast. Virtua President and CEO Dennis Pullin sat down with Alison Darcy, PhD, Woebot’s founder to discuss how this groundbreaking tool is making mental health support more accessible. Click to [view the video](#) or to listen on your favorite podcast platform.

Interprofessional Critical Care Symposium, Oct. 18

The Virtua Center for Nursing Excellence and Innovation, in collaboration with Virtua critical care leadership, will be hosting its [first critical care symposium](#). This interprofessional, accredited event will include presentations on advanced heart failure, cardiovascular surgery, organ transplantation, complex technology in the ICU setting, and much more. The target audience is physicians, physician assistants, advanced practice nurses, medical fellows, nurses, pharmacists, and medical residents.

Participants will be able to:

- Discuss strategies for improving patient outcomes, including respiratory management of ARDS, hemodynamic management, and pharmacological interventions
- Foster collaboration of the interprofessional team to promote best practices in the care of complex patients
- Explore technological advances in critical care and their practical applications

Presenters will include Gary Weissman, MD, MSHP; Emilio Mazza, MD, PhD; Tolulope Agunbiade, MD; Dan Choi, MD; Michael Lee, MD; Janine Vallen, MSN, RN, CCTN, APN-C; Ann Thompson, DO; Mikel Shea Ehntholt, MD; Joanne Phillips, DNP, RN, CPPS, NEA-BC, FCNS; Kavitha Dalal, PharmD; and Donna Wixted, MS, RD.

The event will take place **Friday, Oct. 18, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**, at the Barry D. Brown Health and Education Center (the HEC) in Voorhees. For more details, including CME accreditation, registration information, the agenda, and more, click [here](#).

CME: Liver Disease and Transplantation, Nov. 13

The Rowan-Virtua School of Osteopathic Medicine will host a CME session entitled [Liver Disease and Transplantation](#) on **Wednesday, Nov. 13, from 12 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.** at the Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Rehab Solarium, 1600 Haddon Ave, Camden. The live activity is designated for *3.5 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™*

Target audience: physicians, physician assistants, advanced nurse practitioners, medical residents, medical fellows, and nurses.

Objectives: Participants will be able to:

1. Recognize acute hepatologic issues and rationale based on pathophysiologic manifestations of liver disease and failure
2. Identify the treatment options for acute emergent hepatologic issues, including hepatic encephalopathy, hepato-renal syndrome, esophageal varices and bleeding, ascites, and acute alcohol related hepatitis
3. Recognize liver transplantation as a treatment option for patients with liver failure, including criteria for transplant referral, evaluation, acceptance for wait listing, transplant surgery, and post-transplant care and management
4. Develop strategies for effective communication and teamwork among health care providers

To register, go to The Virtua Learning System (VLS) and search: Liver Disease and Transplantation. For more information, click [here](#).

We're Stepping Up for Cancer Survivorship With the American Cancer Society, Oct. 20

The Penn Medicine | Virtua Health Cancer Program is proud to support Making Strides Against Breast Cancer **Sunday, Oct. 20**, at Cooper River Park in Pennsauken. The 26th annual event starts at 8:30 a.m. and the 3-mile "at your own pace" walk begins at 9:45 a.m., rain or shine. It ends at 12 noon. The event site will be filled with interactive tents for all ages and many wonderful sponsors around the field with info and giveaways. Look for the Virtua-sponsored Survivor's Tent.

"Feel free to join us," said Matthew Puc, MD, Virtua thoracic surgeon, and the program's director. "It will be a great day to support our community and go for a walk."

For more information and to sign up, go to MakingStridesWalk.org/GPSNJ.

2025 Community Needs Assessment Kickoff, Oct. 22

The South Jersey Health Collaborative, which includes Virtua, Cooper, Jefferson, and the health departments of Burlington, Camden, and Gloucester counties, will once again come together in 2025 to undertake a comprehensive regional community health needs assessment (CHNA). The partners have worked together since 2013 to create a collective CHNA for the region, a rigorous and inclusive process conducted every three years, in accordance with the Affordable Care Act. This collective action has generated robust, shared regional data and community health improvement plans for collective action to further the health systems' commitment to population health management.

As we kick off our next assessment, the partnership has engaged 35th Street Consulting, LLC, to conduct our CHNA activities. We will resume in-person events as a part of this round of CHNA process in the form of forums and focus groups.

The collaborative has scheduled a webinar event on **Tuesday, Oct. 22, 9 to 10 a.m.** (via Zoom) to provide information about the process and its activities. The webinar is open to the public— our community, community partners, and internal stakeholders. Anyone who would like to participate in various activities is welcome to register [here](#). The webinar will be recorded and available to be posted publicly. To learn more, [here is a flyer](#) to print and share.