

Clinician Update

October 17, 2024

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

Rectal Cancer Program Earns National Accreditation

The Penn Medicine | Virtua Health Cancer Program's colorectal team has once again earned high honors from the National Accreditation Program for Rectal Cancer (NAPRC). This recognition from the American College of Surgeons acknowledges exceptional standards for program management, advanced clinical services, and quality improvement for patients.

"Our multidisciplinary team is achieving and maintaining the highest standards of rectal cancer treatment," said colorectal surgeon Avi Galler, MD, director of Virtua's rectal cancer program. "Every member of the team strives to offer exceptional care through a comprehensive, patient-centered approach."

Our experienced rectal cancer team includes representatives from surgery, pathology, radiology, radiation oncology, medical oncology, and the cancer program. Congratulations to the entire team who contributed months of dedication and collaboration to achieve this important recognition for clinical excellence.

Newsweek Recognizes Virtua's ASCs as America's Best

Congratulations to 18 of Virtua's affiliated ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs) for being ranked among America's Best by Newsweek. Out of the 5,000 centers that Newsweek analyzed, only 650 made the list. Virtua's affiliated ASCs included 16 in New Jersey, one in Pennsylvania, and one in Delaware. The results are based on quality of care, performance data, patient experience, and peer recommendations. This year, Newsweek also highlighted specialties like orthopedics, ophthalmology, and gastroenterology. Virtua is proud to partner with these outstanding surgery centers.

"The tremendous growth of ASCs over the past several years is evidence of patients' preference for same-day outpatient procedures and the enhanced capacity of ASCs to provide them," said Barry Graf, senior vice president of partnerships and business development at Virtua. "Having so many of Virtua's joint-venture ASCs make the Newsweek list speaks to our commitment to quality care and outcomes."

See the [Virtua affiliated ASCs that made Newsweek's list](#).

Robotic Surgery Advancement Now at Virtua Mount Holly

Virtua Health continues to make historic inroads in the utilization of the world's most advanced robotic-surgery system, called the da Vinci 5. Back in June, manufacturer Intuitive Surgical chose Virtua as one of 100 centers nationwide to offer the new system due to Virtua's extensive experience with robotic-assisted procedures. As of this week, the device is now also in service at Virtua Mount Holly Hospital, joining Virtua Marlton Hospital which became the first hospital in the immediate Philadelphia region—and one of just 100 U.S. sites—to use the da Vinci 5, as reported in [*Clinician Update*](#).

The new system includes more than 150 enhancements, including improved accuracy and precision, enhanced views inside the body, novel force-sensing technology that may reduce trauma to tissue, and better positioning options for surgeons.

“Robotic-assisted surgery can offer many benefits over other forms of surgery, including greater precision, faster recovery, and less pain. The da Vinci 5 incorporates an array of technological advancements, which will propel robotic surgery's advantages to an even higher level,” said general surgeon Craig Zaretsky, MD, chair of Virtua's Department of Surgery.

Surgeon Michael Winter, DO, said the updated version gives surgeons like him more control and the ability to be even more precise than before. “So, we can do anything from complex urology, thoracic surgery, general surgery—particularly for hernias—colon surgery, and more. There's really endless applications of this robot.”

Watch a demonstration by Dr. Winter on [6 ABC](#). Hear insights from Dr. Winter and Jackie Wills, Virtua's director of robotic services, on [KYW Newsradio](#).

Update: USDA Widens Recall Over Listeria Concerns

A [nationwide recall](#) of meat and poultry products potentially contaminated with listeria has expanded to nearly 12 million pounds and now includes ready-to-eat meals sent to U.S. schools, restaurants, and major retailers, federal officials said.

Angela Skrzynski, DO, lead physician for Virtua Primary Care Telehealth, discussed the health impacts of listeria and how to avoid infection with the bacteria. Watch on [6 ABC](#).

More Clinician Training Dates for Woebot Mental Health Tool

Woebot is a mental health app that Virtua has been utilizing with patients experiencing mild-to-moderate anxiety or depression. If you would like to learn more and get training to prescribe the Woebot app, there are two upcoming training sessions live on Teams:

Click [here](#) to join **Tuesday, Oct. 22, from 7 to 7:30 a.m.**

Click [here](#) to join **Wednesday, Oct. 30 from 5 to 5:30 p.m.**

Have You Downloaded Haiku for Epic Secure Chat? If Not, IT Is Here to Help

Virtua Health is now live on Epic Secure Chat, the HIPAA-compliant messaging tool within the Epic system designed to allow users to communicate and collaborate with other Epic users through a secure messaging channel. It replaces QliqCHAT for secure, person-to-person clinical communications and is available in Epic on workstations as well as through Haiku and Rover. To utilize this tool on your mobile phone, you would need to download Haiku.

To aid colleagues in utilizing this new chat functionality, we are hosting a Virtual Haiku Download Event on **Friday, Oct. 18** from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Any colleague who would like assistance with downloading and activating Haiku on their mobile device is welcome to join trainers and clinical informaticists who will walk them through the enrollment process.

To join the download event, [click this link here](#).

Additionally, a [Secure Chat Home Page](#) is available with resources to help you during this transition to Secure Chat. The page includes information on How to Access Secure Chat, How to Use Secure Chat, and Frequently Asked Questions.

Haiku Download Event Meeting Information

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 228 353 099 326

Passcode: 8UGTGy

Dial in by phone

+1 551-220-2405, [484716280#](#) United States, Jersey City

[Find a local number](#)

Phone conference ID: 484 716 280#

Program Outcomes and Metrics are Required as Part of Audit of Continuing Medical Education (CME) Programs

As reported in the [Sept. 26 Clinician Update](#), Virtua's Continuing Education Department is conducting an internal audit of our current CME programs that are categorized as Regular Scheduled Series (RSS) to ensure these programs are compliant with current policies. The department thanks those who have submitted outcomes from their CME programs and are now extending a second request to those who have not yet responded.

Obtaining outcomes or metrics from your programs helps justify the continuation of your programs. Metrics can include but are not limited to hospital-acquired infections, patient satisfaction scores, physician satisfaction scores, and 30-day readmission rates, to name just a few. Additionally, the Rowan-Virtua School of Osteopathic Medicine and Virtua Health's Continuing Education Department are required to show the impact from the education programs that are accredited. For this partnership to be successful in its pursuit of Joint Accreditation (JA), obtaining outcome and metric information is

critical. JA is a designation for interprofessional continuing education. Preparations are underway with the goal of submitting the self-study by June 1, 2025. This designation is highly desirable and creates a more collaborative, team-based approach to continuing education and, in turn, clinical practice.

If you have any questions or are unsure of what to submit, please reach out to Virtua's Continuing Education Department at cme-cne@virtua.org, and one of their colleagues can assist.

If you have any questions, please contact cme-cne@virtua.org.

Virtua VP of Clinical Operations Stresses Importance of 2025 Community Needs Assessment, Oct. 22 Kickoff

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 rigorous and inclusive process is 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 partners dedicated to the sustained health and wellbeing of community, we have worked together since 2013 to create a collective CHNA for the region," said John Case, MD, Virtua VP of clinical operations and medical director of behavioral health. "It serves as an invaluable opportunity for us at Virtua, and for all of our partners together to follow a distinct roadmap in addressing our community's social determinants of health."

The collaborative partnership has engaged 35th Street Consulting, LLC, to conduct its CHNA activities, and the process will include in-person events, forums, and focus groups. It all starts with a kickoff webinar on **Tuesday, Oct. 22, from 9 to 10 a.m.** (via Zoom) to provide information about the process and its activities. The webinar is open to the public—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.

Slowing, Stabilizing, Improving Lung Disease

Our most recent issue of the *Today* series of physician education newsletters is now posted to Digital 411. [Pulmonology Today](#) focuses on an advanced new treatment for advanced lung disease (ALD), a condition with a high mortality rate but is yielding more to management as a result of improved experience with medications and better bronchoscopic procedures. Now, pulmonologists at Virtua are offering options to treat even the late stages of various obstructive or interstitial lung conditions.

"Unfortunately, some patients progress to this point of ALD, in spite of best standard medical practice. Generally, ALD is present when the lung function has dropped below about a third of normal function.

At that point, most patients require oxygen and are quite limited,” said Virtua pulmonologist Patrick Mulhall, MD. “But in our advanced lung disease program, we find that improved scoping procedures and better application of more varied antifibrotic and immunosuppressant medications are making a difference.”

To learn more, click here to view [Pulmonology Today](#).

Virtua Experts are Talking Breast Cancer on KYW’s *Bridging Philly*

Clinicians from our Penn Medicine | Virtua Health Cancer Program are appearing in a month-long series about the many facets of breast cancer, including body image, support for caregivers, and post-mastectomy reconstruction. The program, *Bridging Philly* on KYW Newsradio, is hosted by award-winning journalist Racquel Williams, who is also a breast cancer patient in our program. She is sharing her health journey while talking with fellow patients and cancer experts.

Bridging Philly airs on KYW Newsradio on Saturdays and Sundays at 5:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m., and 7:30 p.m. It also airs on Sunday mornings on sister stations B101, 94WIP, BIG 98-1, 1210 WPHT, and 96.5. You can also listen wherever you get your podcasts or on the [Bridging Philly website](#).

Tune in to hear our Penn Medicine | Virtua Health Cancer Program experts:

- **Body Changes After Breast Cancer** (recorded on Oct. 12 and 13): Priya Gor, MD, Penn Hematology Oncology; and Elizabeth Kusturiss, APN, Virtua Sexual Wellness & Pelvic Health
- **Support for Caregivers** (airs on Oct. 19 and 20): Natalie Conboy, LCSW, Penn Medicine | Virtua Health Cancer Program
- **Decisions about Breast Reconstruction** (airs on Oct. 26 and 27): Lori Timmerman, DO, Virtua Breast Care; and Alexander Au, MD, Penn Medicine | Virtua Health Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery; and two patients from the Penn-Virtua program.

HeartTalk Arrives in Homes Next Week

HeartTalk is a quarterly magazine mailed to 127,000 households in Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, and Gloucester counties. It aims to guide readers to follow a healthy lifestyle with expert advice on preventing and managing cardiovascular disease, weight management, and improving lung, digestive, reproductive, and emotional health—and much more.

Special thanks to the following clinicians participating in the fall 2024 issue: Steven Frey, MD; Dan Choi, MD; Tolulope Agunbiade, MD; Jeffrey Namey, MD; Mark Finch, MD; Anita Mehrotra, MD; Beverly Toporowski, MD; Lynn Morgan, MSW, LCSW; Guarav Sharma, MD; Sanket Patel, DO; and Hisham ElGenaidi, MD.

The fall issue arrives in homes next week. Click [here](#) to read the digital version of the magazine. To view past issues, visit [here](#).

Reminder: Complete the Advanced Patient Experience Program

If you haven't yet, remember to complete the Practicing Excellence Advanced Patient Experience Program. Click to [view the guide](#). Remember, discussing the program's teachings with your teammates strengthens its impact. 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:

"He took the time to listen to my concerns and answered my questions very thoroughly. He wanted to ensure what my options were and that we would come up with a plan best suited for my medical issues. I can't see me entrusting my care anywhere else." (Brian Copeland, DO)

"The staff were kind and professional. I was accommodated and made to feel comfortable. This was my first visit, however, I will gladly return. She answered my questions in depth and was very patient." (Chaza Wright-Lugo, MD)

"She is absolutely phenomenal. This was the second time I've seen her. She was caring and very knowledgeable. Explained my lab results, listened to my concerns. Asked me how I was doing and how I was feeling. That was important to me, especially now since I lost my mom, for someone to take the time to actually ask me how I'm doing. She is making sure that I am getting everything checked and staying healthy." (Nicole Zegar, APN)

"She is very caring and listens very intently. You definitely have the feeling that you're talking to someone who's very well educated and will go out of her way to do whatever she can to help you. She's a terrific doctor." (Anne C. Jones, DO)

"She listens to everything. She gives informative feedback. She plays a role in your ultimate treatment moving forward and really cares about what you feel. She's just a very caring physician. I'm thrilled to have always gone to her." (Elizabeth Egan, MD)

Feel Good Moments Coming in 3, 2, 1...

There's a whole bunch to feel good about in the latest Wow-WE video. Lots of VMG practice growth and a big congratulations to interventional pulmonologist Syed Riaz, MD, on completing his 50th robotic bronchoscopy in 50 days using Ion navigation-guided technology. Take a look at the newly revamped NICU Wall of Hope at Virtua Voorhees Hospital, join in the celebration of the Penn Medicine | Virtua Health Proton Therapy Center's anniversary, and get excited as we reached the halfway point for the Rowan-Virtua School of Translational Biomedical Engineering & Sciences. Plus, hip, hip hooray to the Rowan-Virtua School of Medicine class of 2028 on receiving their white coats. All this and more in the latest Wow-WE video!

Click to [view the video](#).

Complete Conflict of Interest Disclosure Attestation by Oct. 31

Currently, 32% of eligible Virtua colleagues who are **supervisor level and above and all employed health care providers** (physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants) have completed the annual Conflict of Interest Disclosure Attestation.

The Attestation is available on the home page of Virtua Works under *Announcements*. Completion is due by **Thursday, Oct. 31**.

Click to view the [updated Conflict of Interest policy](#). Should you have any questions, contact **Raquel Ravelo**, corporate compliance auditor (856-355-0739).

More Virtua in the News

Virtua Has Stable Supplies of IV Fluids Amid National Shortage

When a major supplier of IV fluids closed due to damage from Hurricane Helene, many U.S. hospitals faced shortages of this product. However, Virtua does not source its IV solution from that supplier, Baxter International, so it has stable supplies of IV fluids. Moreover, Virtua has implemented voluntary conservation strategies to help manage its IV solution supply. These measures help to ensure products are allocated effectively to best meet our patients' needs. Read at [NJ.com](#).

Virtua's Digital Chief Named a 'Tech Titan'

A South Jersey business magazine has recognized Tarun Kapoor, MD, among 14 leaders on its inaugural "Tech Titans" list. As SVP and chief digital transformation officer, Dr. Kapoor has also been recognized by *Becker's Healthcare* as one of the nation's "top digital officers to know." Read in [South Jersey Biz](#).

Spirit Halloween Marks \$1M in Donations with New Sensory Room

Virtua unveiled a children's sensory room at Virtua Mount Holly Hospital this week, which was fully funded by national retailer Spirit Halloween. A generous donor since 2011 through its [Spirit of Children](#) initiative, the locally based company has given more than \$1 million to child-life services at Virtua since 2011.

Watch on [Fox 29](#), [NBC 10](#), and [6 ABC](#), and read in [New Jersey Business Magazine](#).

Upcoming Events

LAST CALL: Interprofessional Critical Care Symposium, Friday, 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.

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](#).

This Sunday: We're Stepping Up for Cancer Survivorship With the American Cancer Society,

The Penn Medicine | Virtua Health Cancer Program is proud to support Making Strides Against Breast Cancer this **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.

Spread the Word: Camp Oasis Registration Is Now Open

Presented by the Penn Medicine | Virtua Health Cancer Program, [Camp Oasis](#) is a free, spirit-lifting, one-day getaway camp for children and teens who have a parent or loved one battling cancer. This unique camp fosters positive connections and friendships, empowers campers with the tools to process and share their feelings and fears, and gives children a day to just be a kid.

Registration is now open for this year's winter session on Sunday, Nov. 17 at the NL Aquatic Center in Voorhees. Virtua colleagues are encouraged to share this event with patients and community members who may be interested. Download and share the [Camp Oasis Brochure and Registration Form](#).

For more information about Camp Oasis, visit www.GiveToVirtua.org/CampOasis or contact Jackie Miller at jmiller2@virtua.org or 609-724-8480.

Virtua's Camp Oasis is made possible thanks to our generous donors, including many kind-hearted colleagues. If you would like to help a child attend Camp Oasis, you can do so by making a gift to this year's [Give for Good campaign](#).