

## **Clinician Update**

### **October 20, 2022**

#### **2022 Medical Staff Annual Meetings**

Virtua's respective medical staffs are holding their annual meetings this month. The meetings provide a look back, as well as a preview for what is ahead.

- Next Week! For Virtua Marlton, Virtua Mount Holly, and Virtua Voorhees hospitals, the annual meeting for the combined medical staffs will take place on **Wednesday, Oct. 26**, at 5:30 p.m. at the Barry D. Brown Health Education Center (HEC) in Voorhees. Keep watch of your emails for your invitation and information on the agenda.
- Earlier this week, the Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes and Virtua Willingboro hospitals held their annual meeting for the combined medical staffs. The meeting took place via Microsoft Teams. If you missed it, a link to the recorded program is available. Just email [VirtuaClinician@virtua.org](mailto:VirtuaClinician@virtua.org).

#### **Coronavirus Q&A with Dr. Martin Topiel: Questions from Colleagues**

##### **What is the name of the most recent strain of COVID-19?**

We are seeing growing prevalence of the BQ.1 and BQ1.1 strain of the omicron variant. CDC data from last week stated the BQ group now accounts for about 11% of COVID cases in the United States, particularly in New Jersey, and it is concerning that that percentage may be growing.

BQ.1 and BQ.1.1 may be even more contagious than previous strains of omicron, and that is saying something. It also appears to resist monoclonal antibody treatment and EVUSHELD protection, two of our best care options for high-risk individuals. It's a powerful reason to vaccinate with the latest bivalent vaccine.

##### **Should we take new or enhanced precautions because of this strain?**

Get the bivalent booster if you have not already. It should be active against this variant strain of COVID-19. This booster was designed to protect against the omicron variant and, I believe, will help safeguard people's health—particularly with an expected holiday surge on the horizon. In addition to being up to date with vaccines, I still recommend people wear a mask in public spaces, especially in large-group settings.

##### **Will someone know what strain or variant of COVID they have if they test positive?**

Most likely not. Most tests, including home tests, do not provide that degree of detail. Ultimately, for the average person, that is not essential information. You should isolate yourself and monitor your symptoms no matter what.

##### **What's the latest news in terms of COVID cases and hospitalizations in our region?**

Virtua's COVID hospitalizations had remained fairly steady for months, but there has been an uptick this past week. We experienced COVID surges in the fall/winter of 2020 and 2021, so we expect that trend will repeat in 2022.

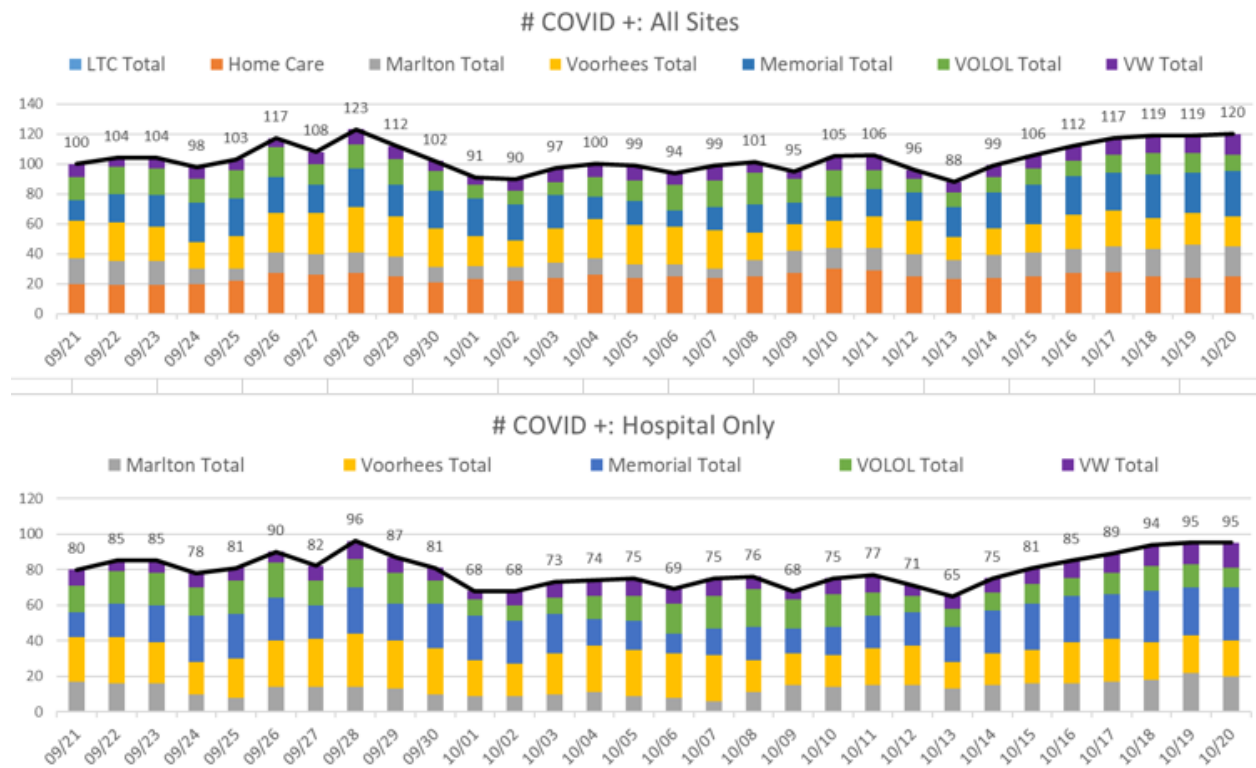
##### **Should people get the flu shot and COVID booster on the same day or space them out?**

That is ultimately a matter of personal preference. If you have not had a strong or adverse reaction to previous COVID-19 vaccines, you would most likely be fine getting both vaccines in one sitting.

Anecdotally, I know many people who wanted to get it “over and done with” in a single day and are glad they did.

RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) is up nationwide and, here in New Jersey, flu season is quickly approaching and of concern. Now is definitely a good time to take proactive, preventive measures. Get vaccinated!

### COVID-19 Census



### Latest COVID-19 Fast Facts

- The rate of transmission in New Jersey was reported today as 0.90.
- The total number of cases reported as of 3 p.m. today:
  - Atlantic County 66,078
  - Burlington County: 105,173 cases
  - Camden County: 127,498 cases
  - Gloucester County: 65,194 cases
- COVID-associated mortality for Camden, Burlington, Gloucester, and Atlantic counties: 4,897.
- The state’s Vaccination Overview dashboard reported 19,209,854 doses of vaccine have been administered.

### Monkeypox Stats

As of today, the number of probable and confirmed cases of monkeypox cases in New Jersey: **741**.

### Virtua Neurologist Advocates for Ukrainians with Disabilities

Dr. Seth Keller traveled to Ukraine this summer to help people who often face severe hardships, even during peacetime. The neurologist at Virtua Neurosciences is part of an effort to support those with

intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in former Eastern Bloc countries, where they typically face lives of deprivation.

In Ukraine and neighboring nations, people with IDD—such as autism, cerebral palsy, and Down Syndrome—usually live in institutions, away from their families and communities, and receive little to no treatment. Russia’s war in Ukraine has worsened these conditions, creating immense suffering.

During the week-long trip, Dr. Keller met with Ukrainian officials to discuss strategies for improving conditions and care. Since returning home, he’s shared his findings and recommendations with other advocacy groups, both in articles and presentations. [Click to read more.](#)

### **Virtua Vein & Vascular Services in the Community**

Virtua Vein & Vascular Services held a free community screening this past Saturday at the Virtua Health & Wellness Center - Cherry Hill. More than 70 people turned out to obtain testing to determine their risk for vascular disease. Kudos to the team of physicians, ultrasound techs, medical assistants, and administrators who participated in this effort. Another screening, which is already reached its maximum registrations, will be held Oct. 29 in Moorestown.

### **Virtua Opens Primary Care Telehealth Practice**

Virtua Health has opened a new primary care practice that offers a “telehealth first” approach to care. [Virtua Primary Care Telehealth](#) provides patients with access to board-certified primary care physicians who are experts in delivering care online. Patients of the practice can conduct the majority of their care encounters from the convenience of their home or location of their choosing.

Features of the practice include a range of primary care services, including preventive care, care for chronic conditions, and referrals to specialists who keep the same “telehealth-first” philosophy (when possible). All telehealth visits will take place securely through MyChart.

The telehealth-first practice does have a physical location: 1605 Evesham Road, Suite 100C, in Voorhees, N.J. This is for patients who need an in-person appointment, minor procedures, and testing.

Colleagues interested in scheduling an appointment should contact the Colleague Concierge Service, an exclusive benefit for colleagues and their families. Call 856-325-3344 or [click here](#). (Note that telehealth visits must be completed while in New Jersey.) Click to [view the flyer](#).

### **Neurosurgery Today Now Posted to Digital 411**

Virtua’s most recent issue of its Today series, [Neurosurgery Today](#) highlights the advanced neurosurgical services available at Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital and the partnership between Virtua and Penn Medicine. According to neurosurgeon Patrick Connolly, MD, who helps to lead the neurosurgery partnership between Virtua and Penn Medicine, “Neuroscience specialists at Virtua provide a large majority of the care, with streamlined access to care at Penn, as needed, for the convenience of patients and referrers in South Jersey.” In addition, the newsletter presents a case study involving a patient diagnosed and treated for multiple cerebrovascular conditions by the Virtua-Penn team.

Remember that our library of publications has a home base on [Digital 411](#), found under “Additional Resources/Clinician Publications.” There, you can find archived copies of [Clinician Update](#), as well as a growing resource of the [Today series](#). [Find Neurosurgery Today here](#).

## Heart Walk Update

The American Heart Association Heart Walk is just a few days away! Virtua is the lead sponsor for the Heart Walk and our very own Dr. Reg Blaber is serving as the chair of the event.

**Please note the start time for the walk has changed:**

**Saturday, Oct. 22**

**Arrival at 9 a.m.; program begins at 9:30 a.m.**

[Click for more Details](#)

### Location:

Riverwinds Community Center  
1000 Riverwinds Drive, West Deptford

### Photo Opportunities:

**Team Photos:** All Virtua teams are invited to arrive at the Heart Walk at **8:45 a.m.** for a team photo. Team captains, we invite you to assemble your team members (in their Virtua Heart Walk t-shirts) and follow directions to the step-and-repeat (branded backdrop) where team photos will be taken.

**Virtua Photo:** There are 25 Virtua teams (and counting) participating in the Heart Walk! After the opening program and before we start the Heart Walk, we invite all Virtua walkers to remain in the stadium seats of the amphitheater for a group photo. Further instructions will be given at the close of the program.

**Share Your Photos:** A selfie station will be set up in the Enclave by the river. We encourage you to take photos as you walk! Tag @AHANewJersey and use the hashtag #SNJHeartWalk. You can also share your photos on the [Facebook Group for Virtua colleagues](#).

**Heart Walk T-Shirts:** If you have not registered for the Heart Walk, we encourage you to join us! [Register here](#) and receive your free tee at the Virtua tent.

**Note:** Virtua colleagues, family members, friends, and neighbors are welcome to walk as part of our Virtua Health group. So are dogs! Be sure to invite one and all!

## Virtua is Making Strides Against Breast Cancer

The Making Strides against Breast Cancer Walk took place at Cooper River Park in Pennsauken. The Penn Medicine | Virtua Health Cancer Program proudly sponsored the American Cancer Society in support of our shared efforts in combatting cancer. Virtua hosted the Survivor Tent and provided branded fanny packs and pedometers for participants. Nearly 9,000 walkers participated, raising \$400,000.

## Virtua Health’s Colleague Portal is Now Live!

As you have likely noticed, the new colleague portal launched earlier this week, providing you with a new way to access Virtua news, resources, and information.

Virtua colleagues voted to select the name of the new colleague portal. And after tallying the votes of hundreds of Virtua colleagues, the official name of the portal is *Colleague Corner*.

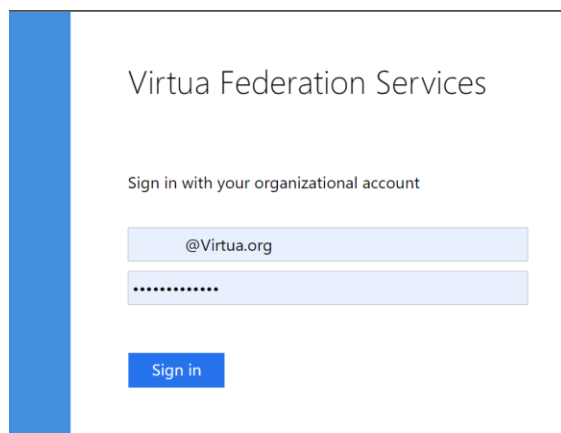
Although anything new comes with an adjustment period, Colleague Corner provides a simplified user interface, is more visually pleasing, and has the capacity to expand over time to include more features and offerings.

Remember, if you are looking for the VINE, you can easily reach it by clicking the large button in the top-right corner of the Colleague Corner home screen.

We hope you enjoy the new features of Colleague Corner, such as:

- Integration with Microsoft Teams, Virtua Works, the IT Customer Portal, and other tools/resources frequently used throughout Virtua
- Prominent, frequently updated links to news and noteworthy happenings across the health system
- Improved on-the-go access to Daily Huddles and more

We encourage you to explore Colleague Corner and see all that it has to offer. This includes the mobile version, which you can access by way of the Microsoft Teams app. Some features may require you to login to the Virtua network to use them, such as accessing Virtua Works from the Teams mobile app. If you see a Virtua Federation Services prompt, login using your Virtua network username and password.



Virtua Federation Services

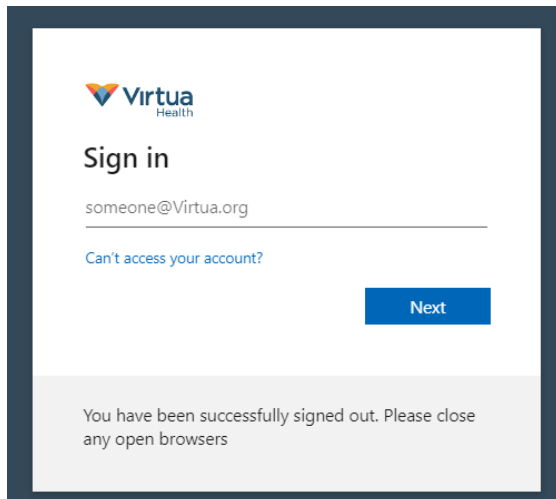
Sign in with your organizational account

@Virtua.org

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Sign in

As a reminder, if you see the prompt below, log in using your UPN *username@virtua.org* account and network password. Do not use wjhs\username.



You may notice a feedback link within Colleague Corner. We welcome anything you'd like to share about your Colleague Corner experience. Technical questions can be directed to the IT Customer Portal at [virtua.service-now.com/virtua](https://virtua.service-now.com/virtua).

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

Virtua Health colleagues, who are supervisor level and above, and all employed health care providers (physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants) are required to complete the annual Conflict of Interest Disclosure Attestation by **Monday, Oct, 31**.

Currently, **26%** have completed the annual Conflict of Interest.

The Conflict of Interest Disclosure Attestation is available on the home page of Virtua Works under announcements. On Virtua Works please click "View More Announcements" to complete the Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ryan Peoples, compliance manager (856-355-0729), or Raquel Ravelo, corporate compliance auditor (856-355-0739).

### **Flu Vaccination Program by Nov. 1**

To date, **7,591** colleagues have received their flu vaccinations. We thank you for your participation in Virtua's mandatory Flu Vaccination Program. All colleagues should receive their flu shots by 11:59 p.m. on **Tuesday, Nov. 1**. We ask that you encourage colleagues to click on the [Colleague Flu Information button](#) on the VINE for additional information. Questions are welcome. Email [flu@virtua.org](mailto:flu@virtua.org) or call 856-761-3900, option 2.

### **Global Diversity Awareness Month Celebrations—Week 3**

**Oct. 19** is **International Pronoun Day**, an initiative that seeks to make respecting, sharing, and educating about personal pronouns commonplace. Remember, colleagues can elect to have their pronouns appear in their email signature using the Virtua Brand Hub. Pronouns can also be added to Virtua Works (click the "Personal" tab on your profile).

For additional information, take the “Communicating across the Gender Spectrum” web-based training on the Virtua Learning System. You can also consult the Human Rights Campaign’s PDF on [Talking About Pronouns in the Workplace](#).

### **Learn More about Virtua’s Colleague Communities!**

Meet some of our members and learn why these groups are so important to Virtua and our community. Information sessions will be hosted from noon to 1 p.m.:

**Friday, Oct. 21** – Virtua Voorhees Hospital

**Thursday, Oct. 27** – Virtua Health & Wellness Center – Camden

### **Don’t Miss our Speaker Series—Register Today!**

**Oct. 25**, 5 to 6:30 p.m.: Join the Black and African American Colleague Community and VirtuAsia for “Just How Do You Include Self-Care in Health Care?!” Clinical psychologist Dr. Erika Dawkins discusses compassion fatigue and shares practices and strategies for prioritizing self-care in health care. [Click to register](#).

**Oct 27**, 4 to 5 p.m.: All are welcome to attend the session “Becoming an Inclusive Leader” with guest speaker Karith Foster. Inclusive leaders do more than promote team diversity. They have the capacity to manage through uncertainty and enable everyone to bring their talent and authentic selves to fulfill the goals of the organization they serve. [Click to register](#).