

Clinician Update

October 24, 2024

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IV Solution Shortage: Conservation Measures

Hurricane Helene caused significant damage to a Baxter production facility in North Carolina, resulting in a nationwide shortage of intravenous (IV) solutions. Fortunately for all of us and the patients we care for, **Virtua Health does not source our IV solution from Baxter, and therefore we presently have stable supplies.**

That said, we must always be good stewards of our resources. As such, we have implemented conservation strategies to help us manage our IV solution supply during this nationwide shortage. These measures, recommended by clinical experts and health care agencies, help to ensure products are allocated wisely to best serve our patients' needs. Hoarding or stockpiling products causes undue strain on our processes and does not reflect the Culture of WE.

Current Conservation Measures:

1. **Update clinical protocols:** Prioritize IV solution use for patients who are critically ill or in need of life-saving treatments.
2. **Reserve IV fluids for patients unable to tolerate enteral hydration.**
3. **Consider enteral electrolyte replacement** whenever feasible and clinically appropriate.
4. **Daily re-evaluation:** Assess all patients daily to determine the need for continued IV fluids.
5. **Discontinue KVO fluids** unless necessary.
6. **No spiking of IV bags** unless immediately necessary.
7. **Utilize smaller volumes:** When clinically appropriate, use smaller IV bags or vials for reconstitution.
8. **No new peritoneal dialysis starts** during this period, to conserve fluids.

We continue to monitor the situation and collaborate with state and federal partners to ensure that patient care remains at the highest standard during this time. We also have formed a cross-departmental committee that meets regularly to review these matters.

We ask for everyone's cooperation as this supply-chain shortage gets resolved. Please direct any questions or concerns to sccs@virtua.org.

Virtua Helps End Use of Race-Based Clinical Tools

Virtua is part of a coalition of 12 Philadelphia-area health systems that have stopped using race adjustments in four decision-making tools used in lung, kidney, and obstetrics care. These moves are expected to improve health outcomes for Black, Hispanic, and Asian patients.

For example:

- Black and Asian patients with lung disease will be diagnosed earlier and receive the right treatments sooner.
- Black patients with chronic kidney disease will be identified sooner, so they can get earlier treatment, including transplants.
- More kidneys will be available for transplantation, due to the removal of race from consideration in kidney donation.
- Black and Hispanic pregnant patients will have the same opportunity to have a vaginal birth after a previous C-section as others who are pregnant.

The group—called the Regional Coalition to Eliminate Race-Based Medicine—is working to remove race considerations in other clinical tools, as well.

The coalition “is doing vital work to enable all members of our communities—regardless of their race—to live healthier, longer lives,” said Lisa Ferraro, SVP for Virtua and president of Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital.

Read in [The Philadelphia Inquirer](#), [Stat News](#) and [Yahoo! Finance](#).

Research Update: User-Friendly Enhancements to CITI Program

The Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative Program (CITI Program) is widely recognized as the best practice platform for Human Subjects Research training requirements. Virtua’s Human Research Protection Unit recently evaluated the Virtua Health CITI Program to make it more user-friendly. In doing so, it was made to be more role-specific. Starting **Oct. 28**, when you log into CITI, you will notice more roles for your selection. In addition, be sure to select Virtua Health as your institution in the drop-down so that the Human Research Protection Program has access to the courses you have completed.

For more information, contact David Remely, senior IRB analyst, at dremely@virtua.org.

Reminder: Complete the Practicing Excellence Experience Program

We encourage everyone to complete the Advanced Patient Experience Program if you haven't done so already. 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:

"She was very welcoming. She made me feel safe and provided the answers that I needed. She helped me understand the reasoning for certain appointments that I needed to make and she was very kind with me." (Tanya L. Kadrmas-Iannuzzi, DO)

"What an angel, simply put. She is extremely thorough, thoughtful, gentle, and caring. I would not have thought I would actually enjoy a doctor's visit, but after going to this practice, now I do. One main takeaway is that aside from prescribing a helpful treatment, she also educated me on what my medical issue is so that I may have a full understanding of it. Great practice!" (Andrea Martin, APN)

"Dr. Arole saved my life. Her bedside manner is superb." (Chidinma Arole, MD)

"As someone who suffers from illness anxiety, I appreciated the friendly demeanor and sense of humor from the staff and doctor. I felt the doctor was knowledgeable and I left confident in his diagnosis and treatment plan for me. I would feel comfortable going back, as well as recommending this doctor to friends and family." (Nathan D. Bodin, MD)

"My 91-year-old mother fell and hit her head. Dr. Mahon was extremely patient and kind. I appreciate him letting my mom talk. And for giving her excellent care." (Brendan Mahon, DO)

More of Virtua in the News

Sisters Give Birth 17 Hours Apart at Virtua Voorhees

Laura Pellak and Brooke Miles were due to deliver their babies more than a month apart. So when the sisters gave birth on the same day, they were surprised and delighted. A local TV reporter visited the family at Virtua Voorhees Hospital. Watch their touching story on [6 ABC](#).

Soccer Legend Carli Lloyd Thanks Virtua Team for Childbirth Support

The retired athlete gave birth at Virtua Voorhees on Oct. 18, after a long journey with infertility. She expressed her appreciation on Instagram for her OB-GYN Dr. Stacy Ann McCrosson, MD, and midwife Erica N. O'Leary, CNM, as well as her fertility doctor, Louis Manara, DO. Read in [PhillyVoice](#).

Weight-Loss Medications May Help Overcome Alcohol and Drug Addictions

A new study indicates that Ozempic and similar weight-loss drugs can reduce cravings for alcohol and opioids, as well as food. Weight-loss expert Gaurav Sharma, MD, said this could be a “game-changer” for people with substance use disorders. Patient Brandon Downey, a Virtua nurse who takes Wegovy to lose weight, reported that the medication has also helped him to remain alcohol-free. Watch on [CBS 3](#) and read the study in the journal [Addiction](#).

Virtua Expert Discusses Breast Cancer Advances

Lori Timmerman, DO, breast surgeon, spoke about recent achievements in breast cancer care. For example, “more gynecologists [are] looking at their patients’ family histories and sending them to us for risk assessment,” she said. Dr. Timmerman also discussed various surgical and diagnostic advances, as well as the year-old Penn Medicine | Virtua Health Proton Therapy Center, which provides the most advanced radiation treatment right here in South Jersey. Read in [New Jersey Business Magazine](#).

Rock the Vote!

Health care is inherently political. In fact, many voters in the United States cite health care as the single most important issue when heading to the polls. This November, the Virtua workforce encourages everyone to make their voice heard by making a plan to vote -- by mail or in person -- by Nov. 5.

New legislation has established in-person early voting in New Jersey, making voting more accessible and equitable than ever before. Registered voters can cast their ballot in person at a county-designated location on **Saturday, Oct. 26 and Sunday, Nov. 3**. That’s nine additional days to vote!

Burlington and Camden counties each have seven locations for early in-person voting, which will be open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday. Appointments are not necessary.

This expanded voting window is a fantastic benefit for health care workers with busy—sometimes unpredictable—schedules. It also offers flexibility to people in our community who have complex medical needs. In fact, *everyone* should consider voting ahead of Election Day so that a last-minute disruption doesn’t derail their ability to vote.

Because this option is new, many people are unaware it exists. Be a democracy hero and spread the word among your family, friends, colleagues, and patients.

To check your registration status, locate your polling place, and find other non-partisan resources, visit [New Jersey Votes](#). For more information and the list of early-voting locations by county, visit [vote.nj.gov](#).

To read about the slightly different processes in Pennsylvania and Delaware, visit [vote.pa](#) and the [Delaware elections website](#).

An Important Reminder: While all colleagues are, of course, entitled to their individual opinions on political candidates and policies, colleagues are not permitted to represent Virtua or endorse individuals/issues on Virtua's behalf, in our facilities, or otherwise on a Virtua campus or site. Nonprofit healthcare organizations are prohibited from directly or indirectly participating or intervening in any

political campaign in support of, or in opposition to, any political candidate for local, state, or federal public office. This includes any activities meant to show (or could be perceived to show) favor or opposition to one or more candidates, the distribution or the displaying of materials, or the issuing (verbal or written) of public statements made on behalf of the organization.

Federal law does allow health care providers, medical schools, and teaching hospitals to encourage their students, staff, patients, and communities to register to vote. Voter education activities are permitted as long as they are done in a nonpartisan manner.

Upcoming Calendar

Virtua Pulmonary and Sleep Health Fair

Tuesday, Oct. 29, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Riverwinds Country Club Banquet Room
270 Eagle Point Road, West Deptford

This free event offers the chance for your patients to learn how to improve lung health and activity levels. The event includes free health screenings, discussions about lung health with our clinicians and health care professionals, and healthy snacks. Space is limited. To register, email BreatheEasy@virtua.org.

Clinician Training for Woebot Mental Health Tool, Oct. 30

Woebot is a mental health app that Virtua utilizes with patients experiencing mild-to-moderate anxiety or depression. If you would like to learn more and get training to prescribe Woebot, attend the upcoming training session live on Teams on Wednesday, Oct. 30 from 5 to 5:30 p.m. Click [here](#) to join.

Complete Conflict of Interest Disclosure Attestation by Oct. 31

Currently, 40% 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, at 856-355-0739.

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.**

The polling is open to all licensed physicians in America. You are able to 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, seven in each family medicine/internal medicine/pediatrics, and five 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 Virtua-affiliated physicians selected for *Philadelphia Magazine's* Top Docs list in 2024, listed [here](#).

Breast and Lung Cancer Screenings

Nov. 9, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Virtua Health & Wellness Center – Voorhees, park in Lot E

Virtua will host a special one-day screening event to offer both screenings, as well as blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol screenings. Registration is required as space is limited. Call **856-247-7676** by **Nov. 1** to schedule an appointment.

Mammogram criteria:

- Age 40 or older
- Due for a yearly mammogram

Lung screening criteria (must meet all):

- Age 50 or older
- Current or former smoker
- 20 or more pack-year history (Example: 1 pack a day x 20 years = 20 pack-years)

Click to [view the flyer](#).

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 Hospital 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](#).

Help Your Patients Kick the Smoking Habit

Virtua offers two smoking cessation programs designed to get patients the information and tools they need to quit smoking for good. Each program is run by tobacco treatment specialists and tailored to work on their terms.

Individual Counseling Sessions

Most insurance plans cover eight individual counseling visits throughout the year with no out-of-pocket costs. Attendees benefit from close monitoring during their journey.

Small-Group Education and Support Sessions

Our small-group education and support sessions are free and don't require insurance. Patients may [Register for the next class](#) on **Tuesday, Nov. 19**, from 5 to 7 p.m., at the Virtua Health & Wellness Center — Voorhees, 200 Bowman Drive, Suite E132.

Carmen Martinez, a Long-Time Colleague with a Lot of Heart

Representing Virtua's legal department, Carmen Martinez recently celebrated her 30-year service anniversary. A new grandmom, Carmen is busy as can be supporting causes close to her heart, including a foundation that provides support and scholarships to college students. In [this episode of "Here for Good: Inside Edition"](#) with Virtua President and CEO Dennis Pullin, we get to know Carmen, her team, and her passions.

IDEA – Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity for All

[Diwali](#), also known as Deepavali, begins on **Oct. 31**, marking the start of a new financial year for businesses and merchants, and a new harvest season. Known as the Festival of Lights, Diwali symbolizes

the triumph of good over evil and knowledge over ignorance, with the name itself meaning "row of lamps."

Celebrated over five days, Diwali's third day (Lakshmi Puja or Main Diwali) is the highlight of the festival, as families seek blessings for abundance and fortune. This Hindu holiday is a significant occasion for millions around the world.

Virtua supports a vibrant colleague community, VirtuAsia, that welcomes those who identify within the Asian American and Pacific Islander diaspora. Allies are encouraged to join as well! Learn more or connect by contacting VirtuAsiaCommittee@virtua.org.