

Clinician Update

October 26, 2023

Virtua is “All In” on Excellence

Join us on our ongoing journey toward Practicing Excellence! Beginning **Monday, Oct. 30**, we will embark on our next program, *Virtua All In on Excellence*. Unlike the *Patient Experience* program (in which nine learning tracks were created for different job functions/locations), all Virtua colleagues will participate in the same course. This means enhanced opportunities for us to discuss and demonstrate our learnings.

The *Virtua All In on Excellence* program has four chapters, starting with four tips under the chapter “I Belong Here.” As before, we will watch one new tip each week. This means we will wrap the *All In* program in the early spring 2024.

This [roadmap](#), available on Colleague Corner, ensures you and your team know exactly what tip we will focus on each week Virtua-wide.

Good news! In a shift from the previous program, all Virtua colleagues have been automatically enrolled in the *All In* program. There is no need to enter a join code.

Here are instructions on how to access the program:

- Open the Practicing Excellence app on your mobile device or page via your web browser.
- Navigate to the *Progress* menu/tab.
- Select the *Virtua All In on Excellence Program*.

For colleagues who just joined our organization and do not currently have a Practicing Excellence account, click to [view instructions](#) on logging into Practicing Excellence and joining the *Virtua All In on Excellence Program*.

During the week of **Oct. 30**, watch the first tip in the “I Belong Here” chapter, which is called “The Language of Belonging.” After you do, the second tip (“Unintended Signals of Exclusion”) will automatically be presented for your viewing and listening enjoyment.

Although you are welcome to explore the full Practicing Excellence library, we ask you to watch these tips in order on a weekly basis, that way we fully absorb the content as a unified workforce.

As we take our next steps in our Practicing Excellence journey, we're excited to bring our entire workforce together and end the year “All In.” That said, **all colleagues must complete the *Patient Experience* program**. Participation is being tracked system-wide with the expectation that all Virtua colleagues earn *Patient Experience* certification as soon as possible.

Although the preferred rhythm for the program is one tip per week, those who are behind or have yet to register with Practicing Excellence can and should complete the program in an expedited manner. The *Patient Experience* program can be completed in under two hours, if needed.

The unity and collective learning among our teams are truly what makes our organization special. Visit the [Practicing Excellence page](#) on Colleague Corner for additional information.

What Patients Are Saying About Our Clinicians

Through their reviews, patients are revealing their confidence in their clinicians. Note the following recent examples and how the patient felt about the experience, and the clinician referenced:

- “She is an awesome doctor who really cares about her patients and takes the time to understand them on a personal level. I highly recommend her to everyone, including individuals who have never visited an OB/GYN.” (Sipika Tyagi, MD)
- “A good doctor. He helped save and change my life.” (Robert Shmuts, DO)
- “He was my liver transplant surgeon. There is just nothing else to say but that he is THE BEST! From my arrival, through my struggle with my disease, my surgery and aftercare, he was an absolute professional who also actually cared. He and the entire team at Virtua saved my life. THANK YOU!” (Ely Sebastian, MD)
- “I’m 59 and she is the best doctor. I have been with her since I was 18 years old!” (Christina Chao, MD)
- “He did surgery on my wife and me. I have to say that he is by far one of the best doctors we have ever been to. He cares so much for his patients and has to be one of the most responsive doctors if you're having any kind of issue. Even though he is crazy busy, he never makes you feel like you're an inconvenience to him. Even if he's in the OR that day, he will make sure to call you back in between surgeries. I can't say enough good things about him.” (Samuel Wasser, MD)

Virtua Emergency Medicine Physician Honored by ACEP

The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) has issued a commendation honoring Russell Harris, MD, for his outstanding contributions to the field of emergency medicine. A retired Navy captain who was awarded two Navy achievement medals during Operation Desert Storm, Dr. Harris has been an emergency physician at Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes since 1985. He has served as chief of the department, chairperson on multiple hospital committees, president of the New Jersey chapter of the ACEP, counselor for the national ACEP, and a representative to multiple federal committees.

As for his long dedication to emergency medicine, Dr. Harris is quick to tout the many professionals who have served by his side. “I have been blessed for over 35 terrific years by the admirable people on this staff,” said Dr. Harris. “To be commended by ACEP is a great honor. I want them to know, they all share this honor with me.”

Virtua Ambulatory Surgery Centers Shine on Annual *Newsweek* List

Virtua Health's joint-venture ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs) are once again well represented on *Newsweek's* list of the [best ASCs in the nation for 2024](#). Virtua is affiliated with 10 of the 30 New Jersey ASCs to receive a place on the *Newsweek* list this cycle. This lauded group includes the Surgical Center of South Jersey (Mount Laurel), which earned the number one spot in the state for the second consecutive year. Two of our other joint venture ASCs, Surgical Specialists at Princeton and the Center for Ambulatory and Minimally Invasive Surgery (Eatontown), are ranked fourth and fifth in the state, respectively.

Two additional honored ASCs are outside of New Jersey. They are Huntingdon Valley Surgery Center in Pennsylvania and Limestone Surgery Center in Wilmington, Delaware. Limestone Surgery Center is the only ASC in Delaware featured on the *Newsweek* list.

"Virtua's network of ASCs has grown tremendously over the past few years, reflecting shifting preferences among patients and the enhanced capacity of outpatient procedures," said Barry Graf, senior vice president of partnerships and business development at Virtua Health. "We now have 40 ASC partners across three states, united in their commitment to quality, safety, and experience."

To learn more, click [here](#) for a Virtua press release. Read in [Newsweek](#) and [Becker's Hospital Review](#).

Annual Mandatory Conflict of Interest Disclosure Available on Virtua Works

Virtua colleagues, who are supervisor level and above, **and all employed health care providers** (physicians, nurse practitioners, anesthesiologists, and physician assistants) are required to complete the annual Conflict of Interest Disclosure Attestation by **Thursday, Nov. 30**. Conflict of interest is any relationship which is (or appears to be) not in the best interest of Virtua Health and those we serve. This would include any personal, business, or financial benefit received from any decision or action taken for Virtua Health. Please click [here](#) for the Conflict of Interest policy.

The Conflict of Interest Disclosure Attestation will be available on the home page of Virtua Works beginning **Wednesday, Nov. 1**. Please click on the Compliance announcement in Virtua Works. 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).

Gastrointestinal Medicine Today Now Posted to Digital 411

Our most recent issue of the *Today* series of physician education newsletters centers on multiple advancements in gastrointestinal (GI) medicine at Virtua. [Gastrointestinal Medicine Today](#) details how our endoscopists now have an AI-powered tool providing a valuable "second set of eyes." Such smart colonoscopy technology increases accuracy and assists in detecting areas of concern. Virtua is the only

health system in South Jersey that has integrated the technology's use in all of its hospitals and at many of its ambulatory surgery centers.

"The system we are using, GI Genius™, highlights locations for us to examine, on screen, in real time while we conduct the scoping procedure," explained Gregory Seltzer, MD, medical director of Virtua GI and Digestive Health. "It's a huge aid for pointing us particularly to what might be sometimes difficult-to-differentiate hyperplastic lesions.

To learn about this and other GI advancements, [click here to view *Gastrointestinal Medicine Today*](#). 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.

A Review of Therapeutic Drug Monitoring for IBD Combination Therapy

The advent of biologic therapies has enhanced the prognosis for Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD), but many patients exhibit primary or secondary non-response, underscoring the need for rigorous monitoring and therapy optimization to improve outcomes.

Virtua gastroenterologist Sanket Patel, DO, who specializes in treating Crohn's disease and colitis, along with Cedars Sinai gastroenterologist Andres J. Yarur, MD, have published a [review in the *Journal of Clinical Medicine*](#) concluding that the therapeutic drug monitoring (TDM) of anti-tumor necrosis factors in patients with IBD has been proven to be a useful tool. In patients receiving combination therapy, it can also provide an opportunity to further optimize therapies, especially in patients with non-response to drugs and those not achieving the desired pharmacokinetic effect. Conversely, the use of combination therapy and the use of TDM in patients receiving vedolizumab or ustekinumab do not seem to offer a clear benefit.

[Read the full review](#)

Food for Thought: Probiotics and Prebiotics

One of the Topics in *HeartTalk* Now Landing at Local Households

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

One of the topics addressed is a dive into probiotics and prebiotics. "When your microbiome becomes unbalanced, you may experience symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), such as gas, bloating, diarrhea and abdominal pain," said Virtua gastroenterologist Padma Chamarthy, MD. "Prebiotics and probiotics can help the good flora in your gut proliferate and make it more difficult for the bad bacteria than can cause discomfort."

Dr. ChamCarthy's article is among several others bylined by clinicians from across the specialties, including: Vivek Sailam, MD; Ann Thompson, DO; Lynda Bascelli, MD; Mark Weir, MD; Matthew Puc, MD; Omar Choudhri, MD; Ibrahim Moussa, DO; Rita Butler, MD; Luai Tabaza, MD; and Angela Skrzynski, DO. Also thanks to Angela Barody, BSN, RN; and Ericca Palma, RN, MSN.

To read the full article, [click here](#). [Click here to read the rest of the digital version of the magazine](#).

Virtua in the News

Newspaper Highlights Black Female Doctors at Virtua

The *South Jersey Journal*, a monthly publication designed for the region's African-American community, recently highlighted five Black women physicians from Virtua: cardiologist Tolulope Agunbiade, MD, gastroenterologist Krysta Johns-Keating, MD, primary care doctor Denne Thomas-Patterson, MD, and obstetricians/gynecologists Theresa Adeliyi, MD, and Kelli Daniels, MD. (The newspaper is available in print only.)

Beware of Bat Bites & Scratches

When a South Jersey woman was bitten by a tiny bat hiding in her shoe, her husband insisted on taking her to the emergency room. That was very fortunate, according to emergency medicine physician Charles Nolte, DO, who treated the woman at Virtua Voorhees Hospital. Bats that get into homes frequently have rabies—which is always fatal if left untreated. Watch on [CBS 3](#).

Mobile Unit Brings Cancer Screenings to Insured and Uninsured

Virtua is bringing mammograms and other vital health screenings directly into South Jersey communities with our newest mobile program. Earlier this month we shared three media stories featuring the Mobile Health & Cancer Screening Unit. Since then, four more outlets have spotlighted this innovative program! Check out [The Philadelphia Inquirer](#), [NJTV](#), [KYW Newsradio](#), and [NJ101.5](#).

Give for Good: Supporting Clinician Wellness and So Much More

Virtua Health's annual colleague giving campaign, [Give for Good](#), launches Nov. 1, bringing us all the opportunity to make a difference for each other and our patients through philanthropy. Your participation is so important as Virtua focuses on clinician wellness by establishing Refuel Rooms, rolling out peer support networks, and more. Learn about the many program options [here](#). Gifts of all sizes matter, and here at Virtua, 100% of each dollar goes directly to your designation.

"I **Give for Good** because it's at the heart of what we do in our vocation as doctors, allied health professionals, and nurses," said Erik N. DeLue, MD, MBA, CHCQM. "It's an important way we can enhance the positive impact we make upon our community."

To learn more and make your gift, visit [GiveToVirtua.org/Colleagues](https://www.givetovirtua.org/colleagues). If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Philanthropy at 856-355-0830 or gratitude@virtua.org.

Quarterly Cardiology Grand Rounds

Mark Your Calendar for Dec. 20, 7 to 8 a.m.

Please join us for the next Virtua Cardiology Grand Rounds. Our guest will be Rupal O'Quinn, MD, MHCI, FACC, Director, Cardio-Oncology, Penn Presbyterian Medical Center & Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine (Cardiovascular Medicine). This session will cover the importance of cardio-oncology and cancer therapy related to cardiac dysfunction; diagnose and manage cancer therapy-related cardiac dysfunction; and recognize common cardiovascular side effects occurring from newer cancer therapies and optimal management of these toxicities. The target audience is physicians and the interprofessional team. To register for this online event, click [here](#). To learn more, click to [view the flyer](#).

Virtua Celebrates Spiritual Care Week, Oct. 22-28

At Virtua, spiritual care plays a vital role in the well-being of many patients, families, and colleagues. Seven employed chaplains and about 50 trained volunteers provide support in all five hospitals, and by phone to Virtua Samson Cancer Center patients.

In honor of Spiritual Care Week, we asked this dedicated team to share their insights and some facts about themselves. [Read here](#).

Research shows that good spiritual care improves healing and quality of life “for those of any faith or none,” said Father Joe Monahan, director of pastoral care at Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital. “We help people identify what gives them meaning and purpose in life.”

“The biggest thing we do is listen,” said Chaplain Marge McGinley, who oversees spiritual care at Virtua’s four other hospitals.

“It’s a different type of listening. It’s never about us. It’s always about the person we’re speaking with,” she noted. “We have the ability to respond to religious needs, but our job is to accept all people.”

The chaplains also help with difficult decisions, such as goals of care, end-of-life care, and situations involving medical ethics. A new initiative enables chaplains to help staff debrief after a code blue (medical emergency), especially when a death occurs.

Spiritual care volunteers represent a range of religious backgrounds, including Muslim, Jewish, and many Christian denominations.

“We provide the volunteers with 16 hours of training, which is unheard of,” noted McGinley. “It speaks to the quality of care that we insist on.”

Watch for special Spiritual Care Week displays in our hospitals throughout the week.

IDEA – Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity for All

As we wrap up Global Diversity Month, we encourage colleagues to check out IDEA resources on the Virtua Learning System (VLS) and Colleague Corner. Making a commitment to expand our learning helps to fortify the inclusive space we advocate for at Virtua.

Call to Action:

- Visit the VLS for [Inclusion, Diversity and Equity for All \(IDEA\) - Part One: Building our Cultural Competency](#).
- The [IDEA page](#) on the Colleague Corner offers information on our Colleague Communities and resources on a variety of topics.

Magnetizing Success at Virtua

This month's [Wow-WE video](#) spotlights several standout moments for our clinicians. Among the clinicians you'll notice: members of our Cardiology and CT Surgery team who had a strong showing at events. Congrats to the team at Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital for their first Abbott Navitor (TAVR) implant. A round of applause goes to Virtua Marlton Hospital for earning its second Magnet certification. We give a special thanks to April Schetler and Deb Moran for creating new Practicing Excellence learning modules about health equity. And hats off to the NICU and Child Development Center teams for hosting fun, family-friendly events. Radiant faces and joyful smiles were everywhere!

But that's not all. Check out the latest [video](#) to view more of your fellow colleagues in this latest installment—you never know who might appear in a Wow-WE!

Did we miss anything? If so, send your photo(s) and news to hellogood@virtua.org and it may be featured in a Wow-WE video.