

Clinician Update
October 7, 2021

Virtua Health Opens Midwifery Birth & Wellness Center

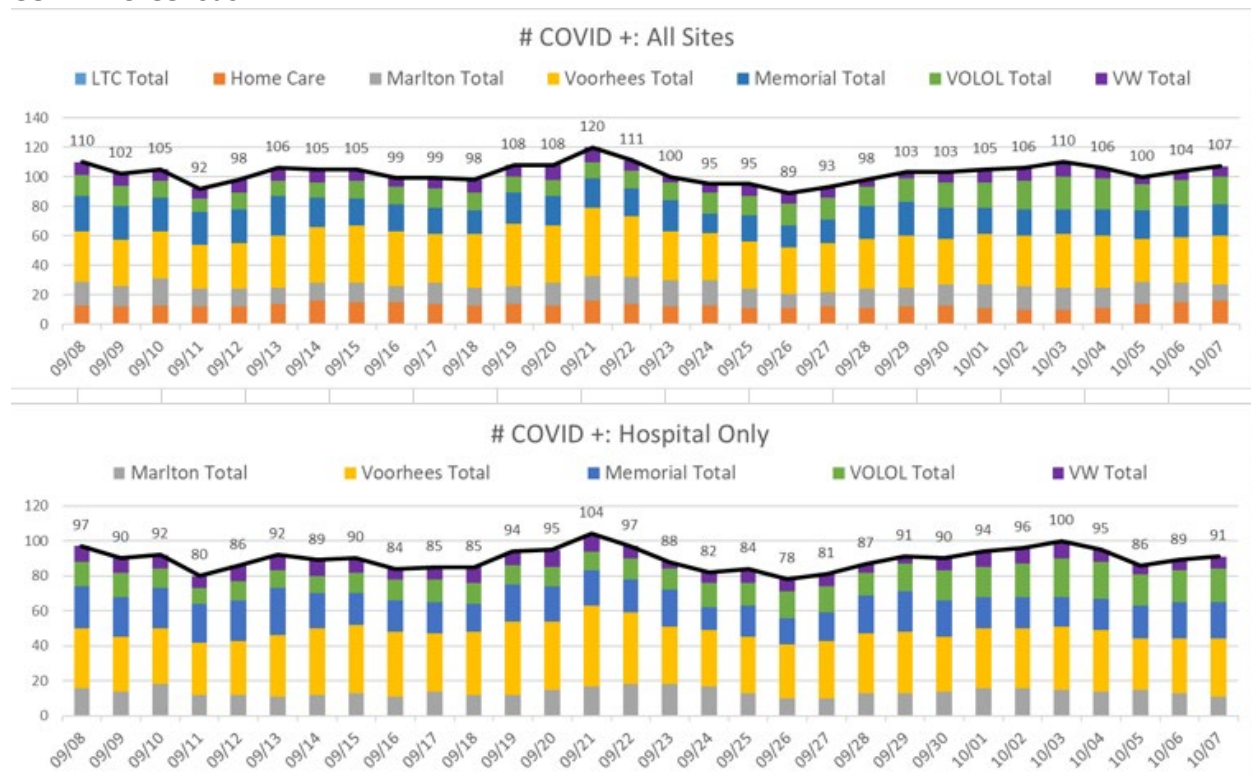
Today, Virtua officially opened the only freestanding [Midwifery Birth & Wellness Center](#) in South Jersey. Located on the campus of Virtua Voorhees Hospital, the Center offers physiologic labor and birth—often called natural labor and birth—as an option for women who are at low risk for pregnancy complications and provides more options for personalized birth and care.

First Lady of New Jersey Tammy Murphy, the Virtua Midwifery team, and invited colleagues and guests attended the celebration and tree-planting ceremony to commemorate the Midwifery Birth & Wellness Center taking root in the community. The tree also symbolizes how babies born at the center will grow and thrive over time, and how families will expand their own family tree at the facility.

The approach to the midwifery model of care is holistic, wellness-based, and patient- and family-centered. Facilitated by a certified nurse midwife, women give birth spontaneously without an epidural or other obstetric intervention, unless medically necessary.

In addition to maternity services, the Virtua Midwifery practice provides a full range of health services for women throughout all stages of life, including caring for teenagers, helping women with fertility issues, providing pre-natal and post-partum care, and offering menopause support.

COVID-19 Census



Latest COVID-19 Fast Facts

- The rate of transmission in New Jersey is 0.89.
- The total number of cases as of 3 p.m. are as follows:
 - Burlington County: 44,608 cases
 - Camden County: 56,899 cases
 - Gloucester County: 31,425 cases
- COVID-associated mortality for Camden, Burlington, and Gloucester counties: 2,794.
- The state's Vaccination Overview dashboard reports 11,849,762 doses of vaccine have been administered.

From the New Jersey Hospital Association COVID-19 Newsletter

- **New Rapid At-Home Test:** The [FDA issued an emergency use authorization](#) this week for the ACON Laboratories Flowflex COVID-19 Home Test, an over-the-counter COVID-19 antigen test. FDA officials said the new product can help boost the availability of rapid, at-home tests and is expected to double the nation's capacity over the next several weeks. By year's end, the manufacturer plans to produce more than 100 million tests per month, and this number will rise to 200 million per month by February 2022, according to the FDA. The agency has authorized more than 400 COVID-19 tests and sample collection devices since March 2020.
- **Racial Disparities in COVID Deaths:** COVID-19 continues to take a heavy toll on communities of color, with a [new NIH study](#) showing that the pandemic caused more deaths by population size for Black, Latino and American Indian/Alaska Native groups than for white or Asian individuals. Scientists used provisional death certificate data from the CDC and population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau to compare excess deaths by race/ethnicity, sex, age group, and cause of death during March to December 2020 with data for the same months in 2019. They found that roughly 2.9 million people died in the United States in that period, and compared with the same period the previous year, there were 477,200 excess deaths, with 74% of them due to COVID-19. In addition, after adjusting for age, the number of excess deaths by population size among Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Latino men and women were more than double those in white and Asian men and women. The analysis was published in the Oct. 5 edition of the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.
- **FDA Warning for Unproven Product:** The FDA recently issued a [warning letter to Strategic Project Management](#) for selling an unapproved product with unproven claims related to COVID-19. The company had been conducting online sales of a topical antiseptic product called Microsure, with claims of mitigating, preventing, or otherwise protecting against COVID-19, according to the FDA. The FDA ordered the company to correct its claims or face further enforcement actions.
- **Substance Use Disorders and Breakthrough Infection Risk:** New research finds those with substance use disorders may be at greater risk for COVID breakthrough infections. Researchers analyzed electronic health records from nearly 580,000 people in the United States with and without substance use disorders who were fully vaccinated against COVID-19 between Dec. 1, 2020, and Aug. 14, 2021, and who had not been infected with SARS-CoV-2 before the vaccination. Led by researchers at the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), they determined the proportion of people in each group who contracted SARS-CoV-2 at least 14 days after their final vaccination. The [researchers found that the risk of breakthrough infections was significantly higher in people with substance use disorders](#) than in those without: 7% of vaccinated people with substance use disorders had a breakthrough infection during the study, compared with 3.6% of vaccinated people without substance use disorders.

Vaccine Update: Boosters and Expanded Authorization

Pfizer

Today, Pfizer and BioNTech asked federal regulators to authorize emergency use of their coronavirus vaccine for children ages 5 to 11. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has promised to move quickly on the request, and has tentatively scheduled a meeting on Oct. 26 to consider it. A ruling is expected between Halloween and Thanksgiving.

Moderna, Johnson & Johnson

This week, Johnson & Johnson filed a request with the FDA to authorize booster shots of its COVID-19 vaccine for individuals 18 and older. The company did not formally recommend a specific interval for when boosters should be administered—with everything from two months to six months currently under consideration.

Next week, the FDA will assemble a panel of outside advisors to review booster data provided by Johnson & Johnson—as well as previously submitted data from Moderna. This serves as step one in a review process that would also require input from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. According to the Associated Press, if both agencies give the green light, it is possible that Johnson & Johnson and/or Moderna boosters may roll out before the end of October.

Virtua Health will keep you posted as this news develops.

Virtua's Brand Ranks Highest in NJ

In a national ranking of healthcare brands, Virtua Health ranked highest in New Jersey and 75th in the country. The accompanying research, which was led by multiple organizations including the American Hospital Association, was entitled [Humanizing Brand Experience](#) and provides deep insights into how people think about health care and the accompanying emotions they rely on to make decisions. You can [read more about it here](#).

Virtua Named Most Wired

Virtua has been named a [Most Wired](#) health system in the U.S. by the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME). For the 10th straight year and the 13th time overall, this recognition highlights Virtua's exceptional teamwork, dedication, and innovative technology, which upholds its status as a leader in health care.

"This year presented a number of new challenges—including the need to schedule and process more than 400,000 COVID-19 vaccine appointments and over 225,000 telehealth appointments. Throughout it all, our teams demonstrated creativity and problem-solving skills and—more importantly—a deeply held commitment to do right by the people in our community," said Tom Gordon, senior vice president and chief information officer.

Virtua has earned the Most Wired recognition as a certified Level 9 health system. These top-rated organizations are realizing meaningful outcomes, including improved quality of care, improved patient experience, reduced costs, and broader patient access to health care services.

Surveying Your Expertise: U.S. News & World Report Making Sure Your Opinion Is Heard

The influential *U.S. News & World Report* Best Hospitals survey assesses your expert opinion on which hospitals are among the best at providing care for complex or challenging conditions. Survey-eligible

physicians who are Doximity users as of Nov. 1, 2021 can take the survey online later this upcoming spring. So, just a reminder that in order to be eligible to digitally vote for the upcoming survey, you need to **claim your Doximity profile before Nov. 1**. It's free and easy to do, and the only online platform where such voting takes place. *If you have not yet registered, you can do so now and join over one million health care professionals at [doximity.com](https://www.doximity.com)*. Need to know how to establish your Doximity profile? It's simple. [Just follow the instructions here](#).

Mark Your Calendar – 2021 Medical Staff Annual Meetings This Month

The 2021 Medical Staff Annual Meetings will take place in the coming weeks. The meetings will provide a look back on what was a very momentous year, as well as a preview for what is ahead. Keep watch of your emails for your invitation.

As a reminder, here are the dates for the respective meetings:

- For **Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes Camden and Virtua Willingboro** hospitals, the annual meeting for the combined medical staffs will take place **Tuesday, Oct. 19, at 5 p.m.**
- For **Virtua Marlton, Virtua Mount Holly, and Virtua Voorhees** hospitals, the annual meeting for the combined medical staffs will take place on **Wednesday Oct. 20, at 6 p.m.**

Virtua Radiology Teams Advocate for Breast Health

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Every year, more than 268,000 women are diagnosed with breast cancer. The good news is that when breast cancer is detected early through a mammogram, it can be treated more successfully.

Virtua's radiology teams are here to take care of your patients at convenient locations in Burlington, Camden, and Gloucester counties. Virtua offers 3D mammography at three locations: Cherry Hill, Mount Holly, and Willingboro.

If your patient's previous mammogram was not at Virtua—not a problem! The radiology team can request past images from other facilities. Scheduling is easy and appointments are available with a doctor's script and a call to the Virtua radiology scheduling team at 855-847-8824.

Event Alert! In recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October, the Women of Virtua Colleague Community is holding a virtual event for Virtua colleagues on **Thursday, Oct. 14**. Experts on the panel will discuss breast health for all individuals, breast cancer risk and self-exams for men, and the importance of breast education for the LGBTQ+ community. Click [to register](#); click to [view the flyer](#).

All That We Are—Celebrating Global Diversity

Join us on **Wednesday, Oct. 27** from 3 to 4:30 p.m., as we sit down with Virtua's four Colleague Communities (Women of Virtua, Black and African American, OUT at Virtua, and the newly formed VirtuAsia) in a panel discussion where we explore how our diversity can both set us apart and bring us together. During the discussion, participants will have the opportunity to engage the panel with questions and through their smart devices via Mentimeter.

Additionally, participants can anonymously submit questions to the panel ahead of the forum through this [link](#). Click to [register for the virtual event](#).

Colleague's Gift Honors Joint Venture Team

Virtua received a very special gift from **Dr. Monte Goldstein**, VP and chief medical officer of the Virtua Ambulatory Surgical Centers (ASC). He made the gift in honor of those he works with and is inspired by—the joint venture team. Affectionately known as Dr. Monte, he shared these thoughts about the team:

“Throughout the pandemic, the joint venture team has proven that they are selfless and dedicated. During the initial phases of the crisis, they spent countless hours transporting personal protective equipment to our ASC joint venture partner locations, as well as medications to provide crucial treatments at our acute care hospitals. Fifteen-hour days, seven days a week, became the norm. The team supported our partner locations with an orderly shutdown, re-opening preparations, and a return to operations (copied nationally).

*“Additionally, the team continued to ensure the success of our program and the health and safety of our colleagues and patients. In short, their efforts allowed our ASC partners to provide the highest quality ambulatory surgical care. They are definitely **Here for Good**. I am proud of them and proud to be a member of this team.”*

Dr. Monte's meaningful gift is impactful on so many levels. It supports the Coronavirus Emergency Fund, which allows Virtua to respond to the needs of our community during the pandemic. Additionally, the gift counts toward the Give for Good colleague campaign and recognizes the joint venture team as “Lasting Impact Project Honorees.”

If you are interested in honoring a colleague or team with your Give for Good gift, visit GiveToVirtua.org/Colleagues.

Save the Date – to Walk!

As a way of promoting healthy hearts, Virtua is a sponsor of the American Heart Association Fall Heart Walk to take place **Saturday, Oct. 23** at RiverWinds in West Deptford.

“Heart disease and stroke are two leading causes of death in our country,” said Virtua cardiologist Hafeza Shaikh, DO. “Physical activity, including walking, actively reduces both the risk of contracting cardiovascular disease but also the risk of dying from it. Studies have shown that 150 minutes a week of moderate intensity physical activity can help with prevention and significantly improve risk outcomes. Spending less time sitting and engaging in even a light intensity walk will help to offset the risks of a sedentary lifestyle.”

It is why the Heart Walk is a great opportunity for Virtua colleagues to get out and walk, and to bring family and friends, even pets.

Heart Walk has always been about coming together, getting hearts pumping, honoring survivors—and having fun along the way. As Virtua teams are forming, feel free to join one or create one of your own. All together, we will be representing the overall Virtua team with the singular cause of promoting good heart health. [Click here](#) to register, and remember to join company Virtua Health. No financial commitment is necessary to participate, and Virtua shirts will be provided.