

Clinician Update

October 8, 2020

Virtua to Form a Single Clinically Integrated Network

When Virtua and Lourdes came together last year, the transaction included LHS Health Network (LHSHN), the accountable care organization (ACO) associated with Lourdes. This essentially created two separately managed clinically integrated networks under one health system: VirtuaPhysicianPartners (VPP) and LHSHN. After reviewing the experiences and outcomes of VPP and LHSHN, Virtua Health's Board of Trustees approved a resolution to combine the best practices of VPP and LHSHN to form a singular clinically integrated network. The new organization will be named "Virtua Integrated Network" (VIN) and will initially focus on Medicare, select commercial contracts, and optimizing Virtua employee health outcomes. The process of notification and contracting will be complete by **Dec. 31, 2020**.

Primary care physicians who are interested in joining VIN will need to complete a signed agreement by **Tuesday, Oct. 13** in order to meet participation guidelines. For VMG clinicians, this is being handled internally and there is nothing you need to do at this time. A specialist agreement is being prepared and will be available next month. Clinicians who wish to participate or have questions may contact Erica Schetter at eschetter2@virtua.org.

COVID-19 Corner

Coronavirus Update | Travel Advisory Update

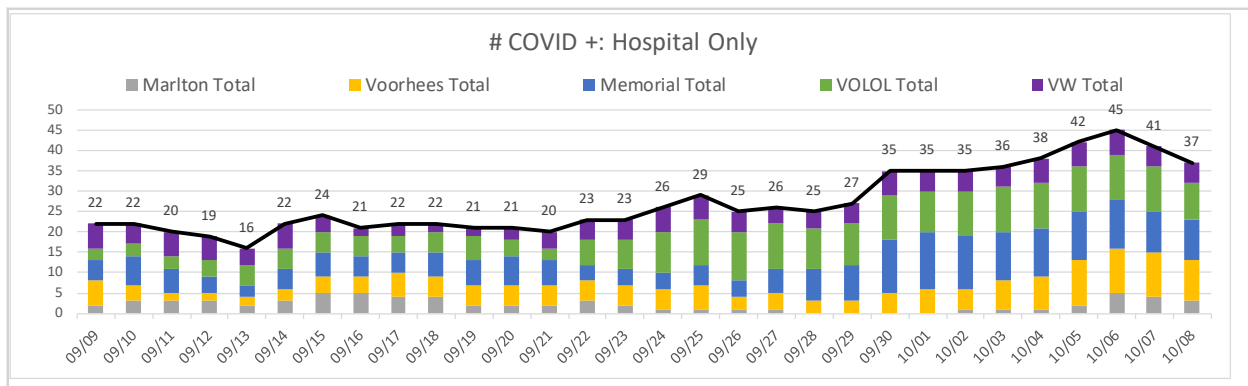
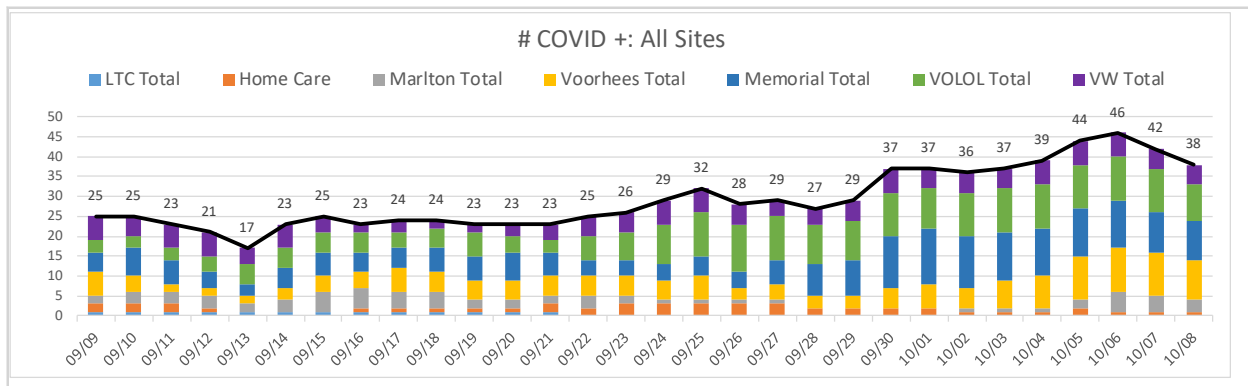
On **Oct. 6**, the State of New Jersey updated its 14-day quarantine travel advisory. New Mexico was added. In total, 35 states and U.S. jurisdictions meet the travel advisory criteria. Click [here](#) to view the complete list and additional details.

Virtua colleagues traveling to those states or traveling internationally are required to call the colleague hotline at 609-444-2828 upon return for guidance and return-to-work instructions. Colleagues who traveled to or from these areas, provided they are not exhibiting symptoms, will return to work. Should screening indicate that a 14-day period of self-monitoring is required before returning to work, colleagues may be required to use their own paid time off and/or may need to take time off on an unpaid basis if no paid time off is available.

Colleague travel to one of the 35 states and U.S. jurisdictions is strongly discouraged to ensure the health and safety of you, your family, your fellow colleagues, and patients.

By the Numbers

The following charts reflect the latest figures for Virtua-site cases of COVID-19.



Fast Facts

- The rate of transmission in New Jersey is continuing to trend upward and is currently at 1.22.
- Locally, in the tri-county area, there have been a total of 1,251 confirmed deaths, as of 1 p.m. today. The state also reports “probable” deaths from COVID-19, with figures shared separately on the [state dashboard](#). For the three counties, probable deaths would account for an additional 101 fatalities.
- The total number of cases are as follows:
 - Burlington County 7,442
 - Camden County 10,286
 - Gloucester County 4,877

New Device Improves Quality of Life for Heart Failure Patients

Virtua’s Heart Rhythm team is now employing an innovative new device to improve the lives of people with heart failure. The Optimizer Smart System® utilizes an electrical current to improve the heart’s ability to pump blood and oxygen to the body.

“The device delivers a precisely timed electrical current to the heart muscle,” said Virtua heart rhythm specialist Heath Saltzman, MD, FACC, FHRS, FACP. “Unlike a traditional pacemaker or defibrillator that works to maintain or restore a normal heart rhythm, the Optimizer works on the cellular level, affecting how calcium is managed in the heart. It strengthens the heart’s contractions and has been shown to improve a patient’s quality of life, reducing heart failure-related symptoms and hospitalizations.”

The device, manufactured by Impulse Dynamics, is implanted in a small pocket under the skin of the upper chest and connected to leads that are placed in the right ventricular septum of the heart. The procedure, which occurs while the patient is under light sedation, takes about 45 minutes. The patient then is monitored overnight in the hospital.

The Optimizer sends electrical pulses to the heart muscle for a total of five hours a day, in one-hour treatments separated by regular intervals. Cardiac contractility modulation increases the influx of calcium ions into cardiac muscle cells, enhancing the heart's ability to contract. Ultimately, over time, the amount of blood pumped out of the heart with each heartbeat increases. Patients experience a reduction in symptoms like shortness of breath and fatigue, and a better quality of life, said Dr. Saltzman.

Patients charge the device once a week for an hour using an external charger placed on their chest.

The device works alongside other heart failure therapies, including medication, a low-sodium diet and exercise. Another advantage is that device does not interfere with implantable cardioverter-defibrillators (ICDs). The Optimizer is expected to last about 15 years before needing to be replaced.

Virtua's Journey to High Reliability: Think Critically

As part of Virtua's High Reliability journey and pursuit of Zero Harm, we will feature a Safety Behavior of the Month. In October, Virtua highlights Think Critically.

When you Think Critically, you practice the following safety behaviors:

- **Use a questioning attitude** every time you interpret information and every time you choose a rule from memory.
- **Validate the information.** Does this information make sense? Is the information consistent with what you would expect?
- **Verify the information.** Use an independent, qualified source when the information is high-risk, unable to be validated, or if it appears to have changed.

Give us an example of how you and your fellow colleagues Think Critically. Please share this safety story by sending it to virtuainfo@virtua.org. It may be featured in an upcoming Daily Huddle.

Virtua in the News

Journalists often turn to Virtua for important news and feature stories. Here's some of the latest press coverage that spotlights the high-quality services we provide:

- **Grant will help Camden's urban farms grow:** Virtua is a key partner in a major initiative bringing the health benefits of both fresh produce and income opportunities to city residents. See story and video [here](#).
- **Virtua cardiologist discusses benefits of running:** Dr. Vivek Sailam spoke to NBC 10 about the physical and mental-health perks of running, in conjunction with Philadelphia's Broad Street

Run. Watch [here](#).

- **The changing face of COVID-19 care:** Health systems across the region have identified a core set of treatments that help fight the disease. Virtua's Dr. Eric Szejman provides his insights in this *Philadelphia Inquirer* story. Read [here](#).

Annual Mandatory Conflict of Interest Disclosure Available on Virtua Works

All Virtua employed health care providers (physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants), as well as colleagues who are director level and above, are required to complete the annual Conflict of Interest Disclosure Attestation by **Friday, Oct. 30**. Conflict of interest is any relationship that is (or appears to be) not in the best interest of Virtua Health and the people 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 is available on the home page of Virtua Works. Please click on the Compliance announcement. Questions and comments are welcome. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ryan Peoples, Compliance Manager (856-355-0729) or Raquel Ravelo, Corporate Compliance Auditor (856-355-0792).

Clinician-Focused Publications Now on Digital 411

Our growing library of publications for Virtua physicians now has a home on Digital 411, found under "[Additional Resources/Clinician Publications](#)." There, you can find archived copies of *Clinician Update* as well as a newsletter series focused on Virtua's specialties. [Cardiology Today](#) and [Thoracic Surgery Today](#) have been mailed to targeted community physicians and have been posted there in digital form. As we produce new issues, we will link them from *Clinician Update*.