

Clinician Update

September 2, 2021

Caring for Colleagues Affected by Hurricane Ida

The immediate impact of yesterday's severe storm is being felt throughout the Delaware Valley, with many reports of damaged – even destroyed – possessions and homes.

At Virtua, our Culture of WE helps us care for each other when we need it the most. For many years, colleagues have supported each other through the Colleague Care Fund, which assists colleagues in financial distress in helping them get back on their feet.

If you would like to support Virtua colleagues by making a gift to the Colleague Care Fund, please visit <https://givetovirtua.org/for-our-colleagues/>.

If the storm has directly caused a financial crisis in your household, we invite you to [download an application](#). Funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis. All applicants must provide documentation of their financial situation as part of the confidential approval process.

Supporting Afghan Refugees in New Jersey

Virtua appreciates how many colleagues have expressed interest in supporting the refugees from Afghanistan who are currently residing at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in Burlington County. This spirit of generosity and caring for others speaks to our desire to always be Here for Good.

Virtua leadership is in regular contact with officials at the joint base and they request that donations and volunteer inquiries be directed to the New Jersey chapter of the [American Red Cross](#).

"The Red Cross is a leader in disaster recovery and providing services to vulnerable people," said Paul Sarnese, AVP of system safety and environmental services. "Virtua colleagues and community members can feel good about lending their support to this vital organization."

To Note: The Virtua Information Technology team encourages colleagues to be mindful when participating in relief efforts during emergency situations or even during special holidays such as Labor Day. Cyber threat actors often capitalize on well-intentioned interests or special holiday sales by sending fraudulent links or attachments via email, social media posts, and text messages. We encourage you to participate in efforts supported by Virtua Health or reputable organizations such as the American Red Cross.

Q&A About Third Doses, Flu Shots, and More

Third doses of the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines will soon be available for health care workers who received the initial series eight months ago. Although the details are still taking shape, we asked Dr. Martin Topiel to provide his expert opinion to our colleagues on what is ahead.

Does Virtua plan to offer the third-dose booster shots of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines to Virtua colleagues? Yes, Virtua will continue to use the Virtua Barry D. Brown Health Education Center in Voorhees as a hub for COVID-19 vaccinations. In the near future, colleagues who received the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines in winter 2020/21 will be able to schedule an appointment for a third dose. Dates and

details will be available soon.

Why do we need another vaccine dose? Some vaccines provide protection for life, while others need boosters to remain as effective as possible. Ongoing research indicates that the immunity provided by COVID-19 vaccines may wane after eight months or so – and that this could contribute to the rise of “breakthrough” COVID cases among vaccinated people.

The need for a third dose should not shake people’s confidence in the vaccines. The original doses are hugely effective in defending recipients from severe illness or death. Still, we want people to be as protected as possible, and a third dose supports that.

Do the third doses protect against the Delta variant? These boosters are essentially the same vaccines as before. (Although clinical trials are underway regarding vaccines that are specific to variants.)

Fortunately, the mRNA vaccines are extremely protective against the Delta strain. A third dose will increase the presence of antibodies in your system. It is literally “a shot in the arm” to boost our immunity.

How should I plan to receive a third COVID-19 vaccine and my annual flu shot? The CDC says there is no contraindication for receiving both vaccinations at the same time or within a short interval. In other words, if you would rather “get it done with” and receive both back-to-back, that is a fine plan – although you may want to use your left arm for one and your right arm for the other to lessen the chances of short-term aches and stiffness.

Personally, I would recommend spacing out the two vaccinations – perhaps by a week or so – to understand the source of any adverse reactions, should that occur.

We saw more cases of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) this summer than we typically do – after it was virtually non-existent last year. This leads me to think flu season could ramp up earlier than usual too, so make a plan to get your flu shot this September.

Should we prioritize the flu shot or the COVID-19 booster? Which is more important? I wouldn’t frame it that way. That’s like saying it’s more important to wear a glove on one hand over the other. Get both as soon as you are able.

If I feel sick after I receive the booster shot, should I report to work? People may experience mild fever or fatigue after the COVID booster, similar to what they may have experienced after the earlier doses.

For those who are sick, ill, or experiencing COVID-like symptoms, please stay home, follow the proper call-out procedures, and call the colleague hotline at **609-444-2828**.

If I received the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) vaccine, can I receive a dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine? At this point, experts recommend people stick to the version of the vaccine they initially received. The one-dose J&J vaccine is not yet approved for a second dose, but those clinical trials are underway.

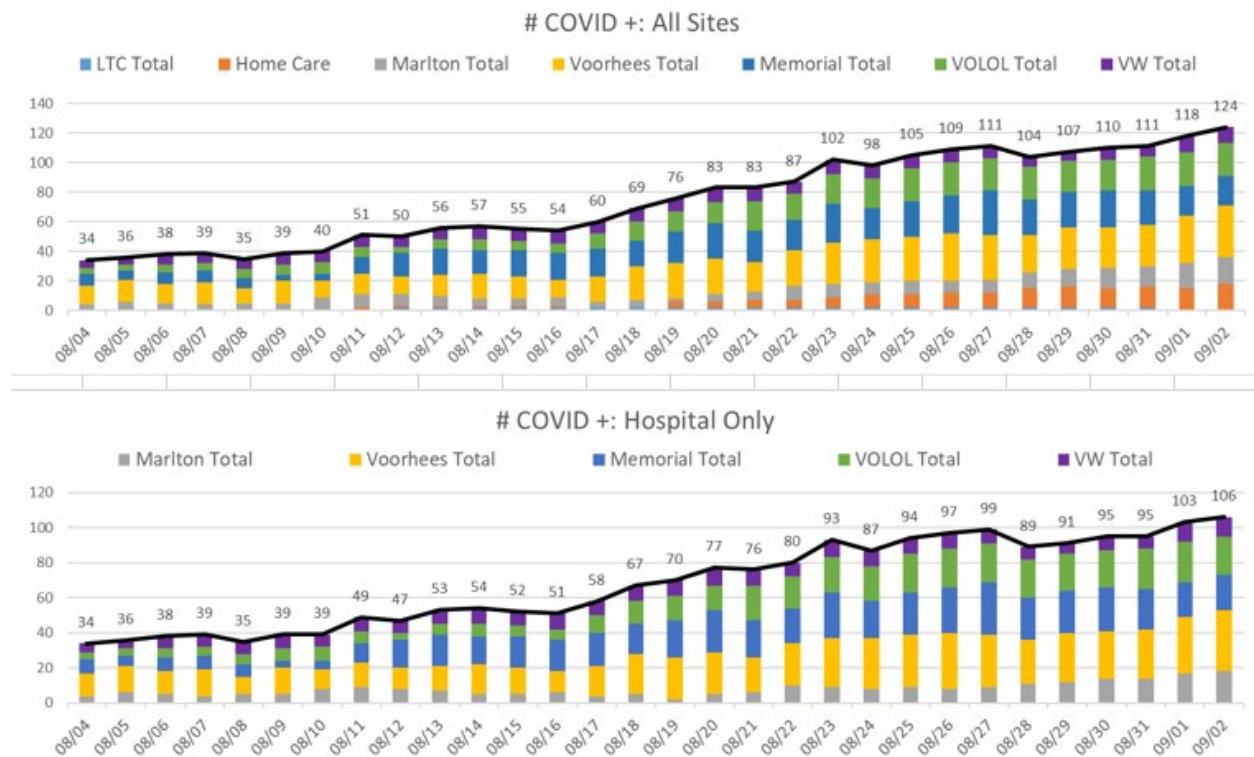
Which is more effective in fighting COVID-19: giving third-doses to vaccinated people or having people get vaccinated for the first time? We are fortunate to live in a country with an abundance of vaccines;

not everyone is so lucky. So whether you need a first dose, second dose, or third dose, you should take advantage of the opportunity when it is presented to you.

Ultimately, we will be most effective in combating COVID if people who are unvaccinated get the vaccine. This moves us closer to herd immunity, which is still out of reach.

Think of it like this: The vaccines are like having a winter coat in the middle of a snowstorm. Your coat does not make the storm go away, and it may not hold up as well after repeated use. But, you are far better prepared and far more likely to stay healthy than someone who is standing in the storm wearing a t-shirt. Someone who is not vaccinated is completely exposed and vulnerable.

COVID-19 Census



Latest COVID-19 Fast Facts

- The rate of transmission in New Jersey is now 1.07.
- The total number of cases as of 3 p.m. are as follows:
 - Burlington County: 41,472 cases
 - Camden County: 52,577 cases
 - Gloucester County: 28,819 cases
- COVID-associated mortality for Camden, Burlington, and Gloucester counties: 2,711.
- The state's Vaccination Overview dashboard reports 11,160,568 doses of vaccine have been administered.

Vaccine Milestone and Upcoming Clinics

New Jersey is nearing a COVID-19 vaccine milestone, as nearly 70% of its people have received at least one dose. Even though New Jersey is the 11th most populated state in the country, it is ahead of every

state in the top 10 in terms of the percentage of vaccinated individuals.

Arriving at 70% vaccination will represent a significant achievement, but the vaccination effort must continue in order to reduce the spread of COVID, particularly the highly contagious Delta variant.

Virtua colleagues looking to receive a first or second dose of the Pfizer vaccine can schedule an appointment at the Virtua Barry D. Brown Health Education Center (HEC) in Voorhees. Please call **856-325-4222** or email covidmegasite@virtua.org. The clinic will be open 8 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. on the following days:

Wednesday, Sept. 8

Friday, Sept. 10

Tuesday, Sept. 14

Wednesday, Sept. 15

Please note: Wednesday, Sept. 15 is the FINAL day for a Virtua colleague to receive the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine and remain compliant with the mandatory vaccine policy.

For more information or to sign up for the series, [click here](#), and please share this information with your team members.

Focus on Education: Virtua Physicians Participating in National Research

Surgical Treatment of Partial-thickness Rotator Cuff Tears

Sean McMillan, DO, chief of orthopedics at Virtua Willingboro and Virtua Our Lady of Lourdes hospitals campuses, was one of seven doctors conducting national research published by *The Orthopaedic Journal of Sports Medicine* investigating the utilization of a resorbable bioinductive bovine collagen implant in partial-thickness rotator cuff tears.

Surgical treatment of partial-thickness rotator cuff tears remains a challenge for orthopedic surgeons. Nonoperative management often succeeds, but in cases of failed conservative treatment, surgical management controversies abound. Surgeons are faced with a choice: perform a debridement with subacromial decompression in hopes that the cuff will then heal as a result, or complete the tear and perform a repair as if it were a full-thickness lesion.

Dr. McMillan was one of seven doctors conducting research performed at 19 participating centers around the country. The outcomes of the study found that use of the bio-implant has shown promise as an alternative treatment option for partial-thickness tears, compared with the more invasive “take down and repair” approach. This technique has tremendous benefits to the patients, as the study found they experienced less pain, less narcotic consumption, and a substantially quicker recovery compared to traditional rotator cuff repairs. To view the report, it is posted within “Clinician Publications” on the physician resource center [Digital 411](#). To access it directly, simply [click here](#).

Counseling Patients About Firearm Safety

Virtua primary care physician Robert E. Post, MD, was one of four doctors conducting national research published by *Family Medicine* investigating a timely and relevant topic, the role physicians should play in counseling patients about firearm safety.

Based on the alarming national death rate from firearms, the issue of physician-initiated counseling for patients on firearm safety has been raised in many different health care and policy forums. The American Academy of Family Physicians' policy statement on gun violence purports that this is a national public health crisis and recommends screening and educating patients. But, despite the growing rate of deaths caused by firearms, it is not clear what role physicians should have in counseling patients about firearm safety, and how to best prepare them to provide such counseling.

The study concluded that family physicians who had received formal training on firearm safety counseling were significantly more likely to indicate a higher level of comfort with asking their patients about firearms. The findings in this study present an opportunity for medical providers to prepare a consensus statement on the need for formal education around firearm safety counseling. To view the report, it is posted within "Clinician Publications" on the physician resource center [Digital 411](#). To access it directly, simply [click here](#).

Next Week: 5.5 AOA/AMA Credits Offered at Cardiology for Primary Care Symposium

Virtua's Cardiology for Primary Care Symposium, a virtual event held in conjunction with Rowan School of Medicine, takes place on **Saturday, Sept. 11** from 7:15 a.m. to 1 p.m. Virtual doors open at 6:30 a.m. for vendor exhibits and networking. The event is open to primary care practitioners, physicians, NPs, PAs, and nurses on seeking to learn the latest news and trends in cardiovascular care. In addition to 5.5 AOA Category 1-A and 5.5 AMA PRA Category 1 credits™, this year, the program offers 5.5 nursing contact hours. **Clinicians**, [click here](#) to register for Key Essentials: Cardiology for Primary Care CME – Fall 2021. **Nurses**, [click here](#) to register for CEUs.

The cardiology section of the series will focus on current guidelines for treating and optimizing care of the cardiovascular patient. Topics include:

- COVID Management: Cardiovascular Impact with COVID
- Cardiovascular Health Care Disparities
- Congenital Heart Disease: Overview and Implications in Adulthood
- Cardiovascular Pre-Operative Risk Assessment
- Geriatric Cardiology
- Heart Rhythm Disorders and Primary Care
- Cardiovascular Sports Clearance After COVID

Virtua Recognizes National Recovery Month

At Virtua, we proudly offer a medication-assisted treatment program designed to help people overcome opioid disorders. Here, we've created a safe, compassionate space paired with proven clinical methods to help with recovery. Click for [additional information](#).

Empowering Evening for Women Impacted by Gynecologic Cancer

During Gynecologic Oncology Awareness Month, Virtua is hosting a virtual event for those who have been impacted by gynecologic cancer. The free event includes guest speaker Dr. Leona Chang and expert-led discussions on wellness surveillance, cancer genetics, low-impact exercises, and mindful meditation.

The event will take place on **Wednesday, Sept. 15** from 6 to 7:30 p.m. To register, email dgordon@virtua.org or call **856-206-4710**. Click to view [more information](#).

WomenHeart at Virtua

Virtua is offering a monthly support group for woman living with heart disease. During each session, WomenHeart Champions will encourage lead discussions to help improve heart health and reduce future risks and encourage peer support. Meetings will take place via Zoom from 6:30 to 8 p.m. on the following dates:

Thursday, Sept. 9

Thursday, Oct. 14

Thursday, Nov. 11

Click to [view the flyer](#) for details and Zoom information.