

March 20, 2020

COVID-19 Update for Virtua Affiliated Clinicians

Waivers – This week CMS issued several waivers:

- CMS Waiver for Temporary Emergency Coverage of SNF services - patients who require the services of a skilled nursing facility (SNF) do not require a qualifying 3-day prior hospitalization if the need to transfer is as a result of the effect of a disaster or emergency.
- Telehealth Waiver - The White House has waived telehealth restrictions, allowing for Original Medicare billing for telehealth visits without geographic and originating site restrictions. This waiver is situationally specific and not diagnosis-specific to COVID-19. However, it only applies to established patients seen within the last 3 years.
- HIPAA Waivers - HIPAA has been waived to allow providers in good faith to treat their patients through non-HIPAA compliant systems like Google Duo and Face Time. Meanwhile, it appears that more commercial payers are putting out guidance regarding the waiving of co-pays and co-insurance for their members. Most commercial payers have at this time approved telemedicine encounters as billable.

Further Updates to Visitor Hours - As the situation evolves around the COVID-19 pandemic, we continue to revise our policies based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the New Jersey Department of Health. For the health and safety of our patients and their families as well as our staff and the communities we serve, Virtua Health has implemented a no visitation/no-access policy for all inpatient and outpatient locations, including the Emergency Department, with limited exceptions [outlined here](#).

Telehealth - Virtua's Digital Health team continues to refine its telehealth solution. It is creating a team of COVID-19 telemedicine providers using employed physicians at this time and working to increase capacity in the coming days.

Urgent Care - Virtua has recently updated its website to inform consumers that its Urgent Care Centers are currently unable to provide testing. Further, we have temporarily closed our Mount Holly location.

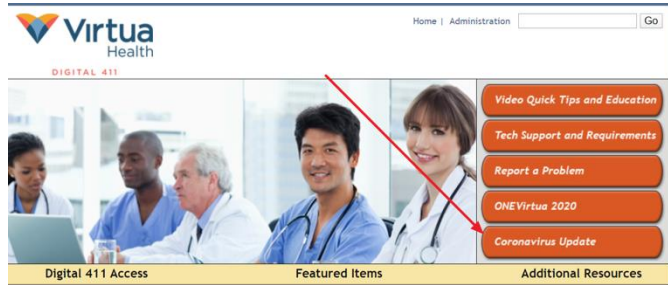
Access Center - The Virtua Health Access Center has initiated a new triage system and updated its workstreams to better triage patients seeking answers and direction related to COVID-19.

Blood Drives - The American Red Cross is reporting an urgent need for blood due to the coronavirus outbreak. Understandably, the Red Cross has taken additional measures to ensure the safety of its donors and recipients. To find a blood drive near you and to stay informed with the latest information, please visit redcrossblood.org.

Ride Health Transportation Services - Currently, Ride Health transportation services are operating normally. Ride Health transportation providers are reinforcing CDC's best practices for infectious disease control and prevention and many of their partnered transportation providers have increased sanitary measures by disinfecting all interior vehicle surfaces after every ride and are now providing hand sanitizer and wipes for all drivers and passengers. Still, considering our current situation, we recommend limiting the Ride Health transportation service for patients in order to avoid potential exposure. Note that according to Virtua's Transportation Assistance Policy and Procedures, under medical eligibility of patients for utilizing this service, "Any patients diagnosed with communicable or contagious disease must not utilize Ride Health (ride-share) transportation service." It is also important to note, per the CDC, mildly

ill and positive tested COVID-19 patients are advised to avoid any public transportation and ride-shared services.

Provider Communications - Virtua Health recognizes the need to keep our entire clinician community informed of practice resources and organizational during the ever-evolving COVID-19 pandemic. We realize that communication with our providers is key and have enhanced some tools to help you stay informed.



- **Digital 411** – This site, located within the “[For Physicians](#)” tab on Virtua.org, is being updated regularly and is available to all of our providers as the trusted source of news and information.

On it, you will find a button specifically for [Coronavirus Updates](#).

- **Webinars**

We have been holding regular webinars to keep you informed. If you have not received an invitation and would like to be included, email awent@virtua.org. Slides from the previous sessions are available on [Digital 411](#).

- **Email**

While our inboxes are awash in messages, particularly now, email still remains a useful tool to convey news. We are working to develop a more segmented approach to communications, to be sure the right message is getting to the right physician community. Please be sure to check your inbox for more COVID-19 Provider Updates.