

## **Clinician Update**

August 20, 2020

### **Virtua Health Initiates COVID-19 Support Group**

A team of social workers at Virtua Health has founded a support group for people who have recovered, or are currently experiencing, COVID-19, and have been treated by a Virtua-affiliated clinician. The group will meet virtually through Zoom and will hold its first session on Thursday, Sept. 3 from noon. to 1p.m. They are expected to meet every other Thursday thereafter.

Across the United States, COVID-19 has infected more than 5.5 million Americans. In New Jersey, nearly 190,000 persons have been diagnosed, and in the three-county area of southern New Jersey, there have been more than 18,500 infections.

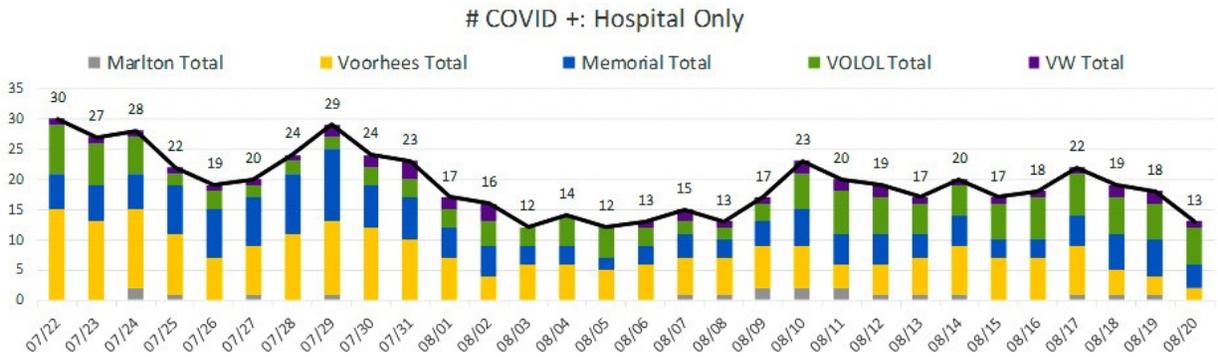
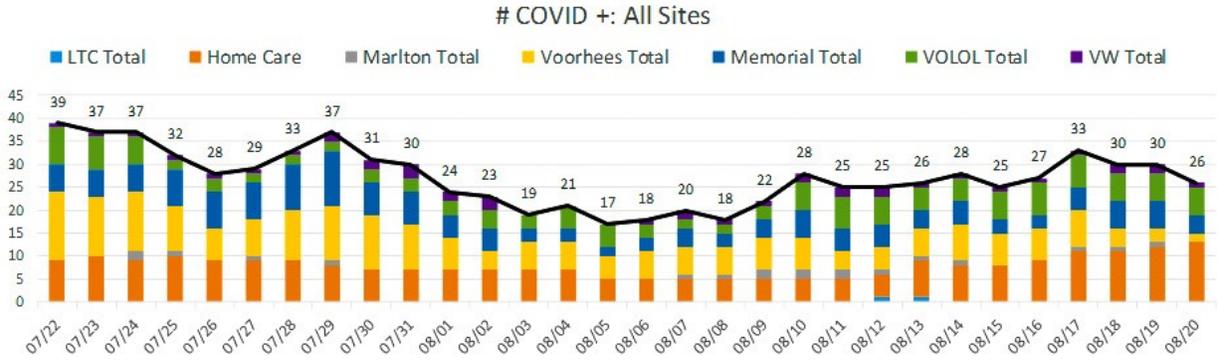
Recognizing the emotional impact of the social isolation, quarantine, and illness, Virtua's social workers decided to create a safe space for patients to speak openly and share their experience with peers. Research has shown that patient support groups provide an important therapeutic resource for individuals overcoming an illness.

To our knowledge, the Virtua COVID-19 Patient Support Group is the first effort of its kind organized by a health system in the South Jersey community.

Details for registration will be included in next week's *Clinician Update*, but if you have questions or wish to refer a patient to participate, contact social work manager Gina Pimentel at [GPimentel@virtua.org](mailto:GPimentel@virtua.org).

### **By the Numbers**

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



**Fast Facts**

- As of Aug. 17, the rate of transmission in New Jersey has once again climbed above 1, and is now 1.06.
- Based on data from Aug. 15, the spot positivity rate for New Jersey is 1.78 percent; however, regionally, South Jersey continues to have the highest percent rate at 2.52 percent, whereas it is 1.47 percent in North Jersey and 1.42 percent in Central Jersey.
- Locally, in the tri-county area, there have been a total of 1,179 confirmed deaths, as of 1 p.m. today. Recently, the state has begun accounting for “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      6,228
  - Camden County          8,899
  - Gloucester County      3,497

**This Week’s Travel Advisory**

On Aug. 18, the State of New Jersey updated its 14-day quarantine travel advisory. Alaska and Delaware were added. In total, 35 states and U.S. jurisdictions meet the criteria below. Click [here](#) to view the complete list.

The travel advisory applies to any individual traveling to or back to New Jersey from states with significant community spread of COVID-19. These states have a positive test rate higher than 10 per 100,000 residents, or a state with a 10 percent or higher positivity rate over a seven-day rolling average.

The State of New Jersey advises individuals to quarantine for a 14-day period from the time of last contact within the identified state. However, per New Jersey Department of Health guidelines, health care workers, as “critical infrastructure workers,” are exempt from the 14-day quarantine period.

Virtua Health 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 so as to ensure the health and safety of you, your family, your fellow colleagues, and patients.

### **What Our Patients and Families Are Saying About Virtua**

Online ratings provide great insight on what Virtua patients really think. By reading their feedback and posting a personalized response, we are able to provide a better overall experience. Here, we share two recent reviews:

From Bernadette, a patient of Virtua Surgical Group – Moorestown:

*Dr. Sharma is congenial, compassionate, and truly caring. His surgical expertise is beyond parallel and his bedside manner is A-One! Surgery is very daunting and scary. He eased my fears and my vertical sleeve gastrectomy went fabulously well. He is genuinely concerned about his patients and their long-term well-being. Dr. Sharma changed my life for the better!*

Throughout Virtua, teams have been hard at work implementing additional safety measures in response to COVID-19. As our practices and facilities welcome more and more people, we have noticed an uptick in online reviews that specifically mention these new precautions.

From Debra, a recent surgical patient, with a five-star review:

*I recently had surgery at Virtua Voorhees. The experience was outstanding. From the time I met with my surgeon in his office to discharge after surgery, the care, concern, and safety was phenomenal. The physicians and staff took extra steps to ensure my safety and their own safety during these unprecedented times, following all necessary infection prevention precautions.*

Most of the reviews Virtua receives are full of praise. Others are critical. Regardless of content, each one presents an opportunity to learn, respond, and demonstrate our commitment to our customers. The next time you provide a five-star patient experience, consider inviting that person to post a review on Google or Facebook.

## **Virtua Pediatric Mobile Services Program Provides Safe Back-to-School Physicals**

In preparation of children returning to school, the Virtua Pediatric Mobile Services Program is providing health physicals and vision and hearing screenings — with flu vaccinations coming soon. So far, the team has cared for 25 kids in three days.

Thanks to Virtua Philanthropy, all services are free for children 6 years old and younger living in underserved communities in Burlington, Camden, and Gloucester counties.

Due to COVID-19, this is the first time since March 20 that the program has provided pediatric physicals and screenings. During the height of the pandemic, the Pediatric Mobile Services team served the community by delivering basic necessities to more than 500 people throughout South Jersey. Deliveries included more than 500 boxes of food; hundreds of diapers and wipes; 50 box fans; 20-plus blood pressure monitors, Fitbits, and scales; and more than 300 toys, blankets, books, and pajamas.

## **Virtua's Journey to High Reliability: A Focus on Red Rules**

As part of Virtua's high reliability journey and pursuit of zero harm, we are featuring a Safety Behavior of the Month. In August, we are highlighting adherence to Red Rules, which is foundational to safety. A Red Rule is one which carries the highest level of risk or consequence to the patient/colleague if not performed exactly each and every time.

Virtua's Red Rule is to always verify a patient's identity using two identifiers. Always verify and match patient identification using NAME and DATE OF BIRTH before taking action with the patient or patient information. Some departments/processes use additional patient identifiers for enhanced safety due to the nature of the process. It's all about matching the patient with the correct patient identifiers before any medication, test, treatment, procedure, therapy, transport, or specimen collection.

Note the following:

- Never use room number.
- Avoid leading the patient. Say, "Please tell me your name" instead of "Are you Mrs. Jones?"
- Ask your department leader about the protocol for when patients are present with similar names (for example, patient alert sticker or placing patient at opposite ends of a unit).
- Engage patients and families in the identification process wherever possible.
- Label specimens in the presence of patients and ask them to check the label to confirm it's their name (if they can).
- Importantly, it is not a HIPAA violation to use patient name and date of birth to identify patients for care, treatment, and record selection.