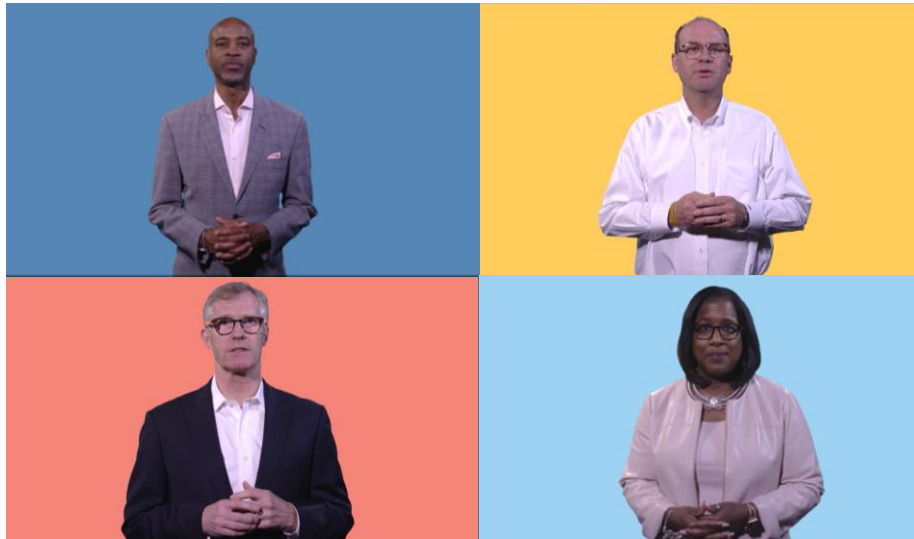


Coronavirus Update

Issue 9 — Thursday, March 19



Please take a moment to watch this important [video message](#) from our leaders.

Time Off Guidelines Related to COVID-19

Virtua Health continues to actively monitor the rapidly evolving status of the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The need to provide care to our community is critical and all colleagues are essential during this time. We also recognize that our colleagues have personal needs. While colleagues should be planning ahead and every effort should be made to come to work during this critical time, as a result of the rapidly changing situation, Virtua will be temporarily relaxing its time off policy. These steps will allow our colleagues to access accrued Extended Sick Time (EST) and be permitted to have negative Personal Time Off (PTO) balances.

Effective March 17, 2020, if a colleague is absent from work due to reasons related to COVID-19 (including a colleague's illness, family member's illness, school/day care closure, or lack of work due to volume/service/program reductions), the guidelines for the modified time off policy must be used in the following order:

1. NJ Paid Sick Leave (for eligible colleagues if applicable; new hires may use accrued NJ Sick time prior to 120 days)
2. PTO (colleagues will be **required** to use PTO bank down to 40 hours, with the **option** to leave 40 hours in PTO bank before EST may be utilized; new hires may use accrued PTO time prior to 90 days)
3. EST (required to be used for colleague's own illness; not required to be used in other circumstances, but available as an option)
4. Colleagues with a PTO bank will be eligible for up to a negative balance of 80 hours of PTO (negative balance not required; available as an option)
5. Remaining time will be unpaid

Leaders have been given guidance on how to implement the relaxed PTO policies and the types of situations that will be covered by the relaxed policy. While Virtua reserves the right to request documentation to support absences related to COVID-19, in most circumstances medical documentation will not be required unless a colleague requires a leave of absence.

On a temporary basis, due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation, time off related to COVID-19 *will not* count as an occurrence.

All colleagues are critical during this time, and if a department has a lack of work due to the ongoing situation (e.g. elective surgery postponement; Gifts Shop closure, etc.) our goal is to redeploy colleagues as necessary to support operations and patient care. If the organization is unable to redeploy the colleague, the colleague will have access to the above relaxed PTO policy.

*****Please understand that this relaxed policy will continue to be reviewed on a regular basis and is subject to change as conditions evolve.***

If you have any questions, please reach out to your leader or call the Human Resources Solution Center at 856-761-3900, option #5 or email hrquestions@virtua.org.

Virtua's Emergency Operations Plan — Personnel Assignments

On Friday, March 13, Virtua activated its Emergency Operations Plan due to the rapidly evolving status of COVID-19. The activation of the Emergency Operations Plan was announced in real time to all colleagues last Friday through Issue 5 of the [Coronavirus Update](#). In that issue, we also shared a [video](#) of some of the ways we are working hard to keep our colleagues safe and to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our facilities.

Virtua will be operating under the Emergency Operations Plan for the foreseeable future, and we want to make sure all of our colleagues understand the importance of their role now, as well as understand why and how they may be called upon to help in a different capacity as the situation progresses. First and foremost, Virtua's Emergency Operations policies recognize that *all colleagues are essential to the functioning of our health care facilities*. To this end, all colleagues scheduled for work should make every effort to report to work as scheduled. Just as important in times of a health care crisis, these policies also provide that in the event of an emergency, colleagues may be assigned to cover all necessary staff positions, at any Virtua location. These assignments may involve duties outside the scope of a colleague's primary job duties and daily routine.

Please visit [Virtua's Emergency Operations Plan](#) — Personnel Assignments on the VINE to read how these guidelines are being put into practice across our health system today. Now and always, it is our highest priority to deliver the safest and highest quality care, while keeping our colleagues fully utilized and productive during these challenging times.

Updated Visitation Policy

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 for the following:

- Labor and Delivery
 - One visitor may accompany laboring woman
 - Must be same visitor throughout hospital stay
- High Risk Obstetrics
 - One designated visitor
 - Must be same visitor throughout hospital stay
- Mother/Baby Unit
 - One designated visitor — the same individual from Labor and Delivery
- Neonatal Intensive Care Unit/ Special Care Nursery
 - 2 visitors
 - Must always be same two individuals
- Pediatric Unit
 - 2 visitors
 - Must always be same two individuals
- Those serving as caregivers for patients undergoing same-day surgeries and procedures
 - 1 visitor
- Terminally-ill patients

The limited exception visitors must wash or sanitize hands prior to entering patient care areas. Anyone coughing or showing other signs of illness will be asked to kindly leave and visit remotely.

The updated [Visitor Guidelines](#) is posted on the VINE. For the latest novel coronavirus related information, visit: virtua.org/coronavirus.

Ride Health Transportation Services

Currently, Ride Health transportation services are operating normally. Please see latest update provided by Ride Health regarding [COVID-19 response](#). 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 our patients in order to avoid potential exposure.

Please note, 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.

Day 1 Onboarding Connections Now Online

Innovation often sparks from the most unexpected of circumstances. In this case, as we move forward as good stewards of health and safety, we are accelerating a recent innovative practice to meet the existing need.

On **Feb. 10** of this year, we launched web-based Connections to all per diem new hires. We've received strong, positive feedback indicating a successful transition in addition to scoring 100 percent across the board on content and user experience.

As of **Monday, March 23**, all new hires will complete their Day 1 Onboarding program, Connections, online. The classroom-based session will no longer be offered. Not only does this new modality reflect best practice in safety and social responsibility, it also provides an established efficient and effective means of onboarding our newest colleagues to Virtua Health.

If you are a hiring manager, onboarding newly hired colleagues is increasingly important to ensuring success. Please complete this short [hiring manager education module](#) and review your Onboarding resources [here](#).

Updated Clinical Orientation Plan

Putting the safety of our colleagues and patients is of the utmost priority and we have worked diligently to ensure that our newest hires receive the education they need in the safest manner possible. All hires will be informed of their orientation expectations during the hiring process.

Effective **Monday, March 23**, the following department orientations will transition to the noted plan. **Please note:** There is no change to the clinical orientation plan for colleagues who work at Virtua Lourdes locations.

Security*

- Safe Patient Handling and Mobility – Online Module in the Virtua Learning System (VLS)
- Infection Prevention – Online Module in the VLS
- Identification and Management of Aggressive Behavior – Online Module in the VLS
- Direct Observer – Online Module in the VLS
 - Validation of quick release and room sweep on unit

Transport*

- Safe Patient Handling and Mobility – Online Module in the VLS
- Infection Prevention – Online Module in the VLS
- Identification and Management of Aggressive Behavior – Online Module in the VLS

Home Care, Unit Secretaries, Therapists, Home Health, Radiology Techs*

- Body Mechanics – In Virtua Compliance Module
- Infection Prevention – Online Module in the VLS

Direct Observers*

- Direct Observer – Online Module in the VLS
 - Validation of quick release and room sweep on unit
- Infection Prevention – Online Module in the VLS
- Identification and Management of Aggressive Behavior – Online Module in the VLS

RNs

- Tuesday: Skills in the Voorhees Learning Lab
- Wednesday: Online Modules from Home (Maggie Lynch resource)

- Thursday: Epic at Epic training center
- Friday: Half day skills in learning lab

PCTs

- Tuesday: Skills in the Virtua Voorhees Learning Lab

*Orientation packets will be sent via email to leaders and their colleagues who will be completing their orientation online.

UPDATED — Vendors, Suppliers, and Contractors Restrictions

Effective immediately, **only vendors, suppliers, and contractors that are critical to our operations will be granted access to Virtua's facilities until further notice.** During regular business hours, Monday through Friday, upon entering a Virtua facility, vendors, suppliers, and contractors are required to check in with Security, Facilities or Receiving. After-hours, vendor, supplier, and contractor access will be handled on a case-by-case basis, at the discretion of Security and Facilities.

Contractors working on approved projects already in process and initiated through the Facilities Development Department, must contact the Facilities Development Department until further notice.

Vendors, suppliers, and contractors who are coughing or showing signs of illness will be asked to leave the Virtua facility. Additionally, they must abide by our hand washing policies when at our facilities.

Please see the [Vendor Instructions](#) located on the VINE should you have any questions.

Blood Drives are Still Taking Place — Help Your Community by Giving Blood

The American Red Cross is reporting an urgent need for blood due to the coronavirus outbreak. If you are feeling healthy and are otherwise eligible, donating blood is a great way to help your community during a difficult time.

Blood drives are scheduled throughout South Jersey in the days ahead, including locations in Pennsauken and Cherry Hill. Virtua Voorhees Hospital will host a blood drive on **Friday, March 20. The hours have been extended to 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

Understandably, the Red Cross has taken additional measures to ensure the safety of its donors and recipients. These include donor temperature screenings, additional screening questions, enhanced disinfecting, and social distancing, among other tactics.

To find a blood drive near you and to stay informed with the latest information, please visit redcrossblood.org.

Hackers Taking Advantage of COVID-19 to Spread Malware

According to *Modern Healthcare*, online hackers have wasted no time figuring out how to exploit the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. Hospitals are already seeing "active attacks." In one type of scam, a sender pretends to be from the CDC and urges a recipient to open a link that deploys malware. Another con points people to an online map that purports to track COVID-19 cases, but actually steals usernames, passwords, and credit card numbers stored in a user's browser. Click [here](#) to read the full article.

Handwashing Resources

Attached are helpful handwashing resources provided by the CDC for health care providers.

A Message from the Pope — Rediscover the Concreteness of the Small Acts of Kindness

During this time of anxiety and uncertainty, it is more important than ever to join together and support one another; to make meaningful connections by showing small acts of kindness and connecting to one another, which is something we all can benefit from.

Pope Francis recently offered wonderful advice we can all use right now about how to face the daily challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Pope suggests, "We need to rediscover the concreteness of small things, the small acts of kindness shown to those who are close to us, family, and friends. We need to realize that our treasure lies in small things. There are tiny gestures that sometimes get lost in the routine of everyday life, gestures of tenderness, affection, compassion, that are nevertheless decisive, important." The Pope gives the examples of sharing "a hot plate of food or a phone call... These are familiar, attentive gestures regarding everyday details that make life meaningful."

And today, in the face of this pandemic, Pope Francis is calling on all denominations to observe a moment of prayer — to unite across the world — to pray for our families, for the sick, and for the people who are taking care of them: doctors, nurses, and volunteers, who risk their lives in this service.

The Pope encourages everyone to hope — even those who do not believe. He reminds us that "we can believe in the love of the people we have around us, and there we can find hope." To read the full interview, [click here](#).

If you have traveled to any country outside of the United States, or have questions related to the coronavirus as it pertains to Virtua Health, please call 609-444-2828.

Colleagues are also invited to email their questions to virtuainfo@virtua.org for potential inclusion in FAQs sections and topics in future issues of *Coronavirus Update*.