

Dear Colleagues

There is no doubt that the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is a serious global and local problem. It is natural to have anxiety as we are inundated with news and updates from a variety of sources. As your medical staff presidents, we want to help you remain informed and reassured as to the preparations that are underway to help us serve our patients and to keep ourselves safe.

Testing - We know that all providers are experiencing challenges with regard to testing. Locally, testing kits did not arrive in our South Jersey region until early last week. However, we anticipate that increased access to testing resources will occur in the near future, including rapid testing with rapid turnaround time for results. This will allow for better triage of patients and staff.

We can share that state based testing is occurring at about 50-to-60 kits a day; Labcorp and Quest have an approximate 5-day turnaround time. Meanwhile, Virtua is evaluating the opportunity to test our patients in a dedicated testing center, once supplies become available. In addition, Virtua's telemedicine tool is being refined to assist with patient triage.

Until then, please review our provider resource site, [Digital 411](#), which has a special Coronavirus Update tab. The link includes an up-to-date screening algorithm and a recent presentation on clinical practice recommendations.

Communications – The Virtua Access Center is being overwhelmed with phone calls from colleagues requesting answers to questions that are available already on the [VINE](#). In addition, a Coronavirus Update newsletter, sent via email, has been developed as the trusted source of information for all colleagues. Please make time to review the latest [Coronavirus Update](#) and to visit the VINE to answer some of your frequently asked questions.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) - Because it is still cold and flu season, and compounded by challenges with supplies, we are using PPE at unbelievable rates. Nationally and locally, we have experienced supply chain challenges. Virtua is actively working to obtain and secure ongoing supplies of essential equipment so that we can take care of our patients safely.

Leadership - This is a challenging time. As providers, we serve as leaders in our offices, for our patients, in our community, and for our staff. People look to us as role models. While anxiety is understandable, it is important to remain vigilant and safe. It is equally important to remain calm and collected, and to avoid the strong emotions that give way in times like this. Rest assured that the medical and administrative leadership at Virtua Health is working tirelessly and proactively to help us and our community get through this emergency. We are fortunate to have such excellent and knowledgeable leaders.

Let's not forget our priority is the health and welfare of our patients who are also feeling scared and anxious. Let's help each other as colleagues, especially those who may be struggling, to get through this stressful time. We want to express our thanks to many of you who have gone above and beyond to deal with this emergency.

No question, this virus is a massive challenge. But, it is worth remembering there are reasons to be reassured: We have better tools than ever to fight it; in most cases, symptoms are mild; there are dozens of treatments that are already being tested, and testing will improve.

Together, we want to thank you for all the work that you are doing and will do to see our health system, colleagues, and patients through this time.

Sincerely,

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