

You are receiving this e-mail from VHHA because you requested a subscription. For continued delivery of this e-mail version, please add jtwalker@vhha.com to your address book today.

Articles:

1. [VHHA in Action](#)
2. [Register for Nov. 29 Healthcare Workforce Summit Hosted by VCCS, VHHA, Stakeholder Groups](#)
3. [HHS Issues Final Rule to Remedy 340B Payment Cuts](#)
4. [Virginia Again Recognized as a Top State in the Nation by Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade Scores](#)
5. [CMS Issues Hospital OPPS, Home Health PPS, Physician Fee Schedule Final Rules for 2024](#)
6. [VHHA Patients Come First Podcast Features UVA Health Sports Medicine Physician, Surgeon](#)
7. [Qualivis to Host Dec. 1 Webinar on the Value of Virtual Nursing](#)
8. [VHHA, VCCRN to Host Nov. 15 Biotech and Beer Networking Event](#)
9. [HHS Issues Threat Alert Following Recent Cyberattack on U.S. Health Care Facility](#)
10. [Around the State](#)

1. VHHA in Action

Each day, VHHA actively works on behalf of its members, their employees, and Virginians to advance the interests of Virginia's hospitals and health care systems. In the past week, here are some developments of interest to Virginia hospitals and health systems:

- The **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)**, the **U.S. Department of Labor**, and the **U.S. Department of Treasury** recently issued a [proposed rule](#) to modify how the independent dispute resolution process functions under the No Surprises Act. The rule would require plans to include claim adjustment reason codes and remittance advice remark codes, among other new information, with the initial payment or notice of payment denial for certain items and services subject to the NSA protections. The rule proposes changes to the batching requirements so that items and services could be batched in the same payment determination if they are: furnished to a single patient on one or more consecutive dates of service and billed on the same claim form (a single patient encounter); billed under the same service code or a comparable code under a different procedural code system; or anesthesiology, radiology, pathology and laboratory items and services billed under service codes belonging to the same Category I CPT code section, as specified in the agencies' guidance. Batched items would be limited to 25 items or services in a single dispute. Lastly, the proposed rule would amend certain requirements related to the open negotiation period preceding the IDR process, the initiation of the process, the dispute eligibility review, and the payment and collection of administrative fees and certified IDR entity fees.
- The **Virginia Infection Prevention Training Center (VIPTC)** at VCU has announced a free, on-demand advanced level course in infection prevention and control. This course will focus on quality and performance improvement, epidemiologic methods for surveillance and basic biostatistical data analysis, interpretation of literature for evidence-based practice, and infection

prevention program management and modifiable risk factors. Funding provided by VDH allows this course to be offered at no charge to participants and CE credits are available. Register for the course [here](#) and learn more from the VIPTC [website](#).

- VIPTC will host a free webinar on Nov. 17 from 12-1 p.m. about Antimicrobial Stewardship and Shorter Antibiotic Resistance. Hear the latest from **Dr. Brad Spellberg**, Chief Medical Officer at the **Los Angeles General Medical Center**, as he discusses the history, pros and cons, and appropriate uses of short-course antibiotics. CE credit is offered. Register for the webinar [here](#).
- VHHA recently hosted a webinar to share information about the **Virginia Department of Health (VDH) Vaccines for Children (VFC)** program. The VFC program provides nirsevimab (Beyfortus), a long-acting monoclonal antibody for the prevention of RSV in infants, free of charge to enrolled birthing hospital providers. During the webinar, VDH representatives provided information on program specifics and enrollment. Officials from the **Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS)** also shared policy and coverage information specific to the administration of Beyfortus in the hospital environment. View a webinar recording [here](#).
- VHHA has produced a [highlight video](#) summarizing the annual fall conference held Sept. 27-29 in Roanoke, Virginia. The [conference](#), whose theme was “Aim For The Stars,” brought together hundreds of health care leaders, clinicians, and stakeholders, as well as partner organizations for networking, shared learning, and collaboration. Program highlights included keynote remarks from **Hayley Arceneaux**, a physician assistant at **St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital** and pediatric cancer survivor who recently served as chief medical officer on the first all-civilian mission to orbit (Inspiration4); and **Kay Firth-Butterfield**, CEO of **Good Tech Advisory** and the former head of Artificial Intelligence and a member of the Executive Committee at the World Economic Forum. Other conference highlights included a reception at the **Taubman Museum of Art**, breakout learning sessions on government advocacy, health care workforce development, and health care quality and safety, and an awards luncheon to honor several health care and community leaders. View the conference brochure [here](#) and the awards luncheon program [here](#).
- The application period for the 2024 Political Leader Program at the **Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership** at the **University of Virginia** is open until Nov. 13. Visit this [link](#) for more information and access the program application link [here](#). The previous class featured several VHHA-affiliated individuals – in 2020, VHHA [entered into a five-year partnership with Sorensen](#) to support its programming and help identify health care leaders who are strong candidates for the Political Leaders Program. Program participants are drawn from a diverse group of applicants from across the state, and will focus on Virginia politics and governing, policy issues and solutions, regional needs, ethical servant leadership, and efforts to unite the Commonwealth. This program is primarily focused on individuals who are 10-plus years removed from college.
- The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** recently released [interim guidance](#) for clinicians with limited access to the monoclonal antibody nirsevimab that was recently approved to prevent respiratory syncytial virus in children ages 2 and younger. Among other recommendations, the guidance calls for prioritizing 100 milligram doses of the treatment for infants under 6 months old and infants at high risk for severe disease due to underlying health conditions.
- The **U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** recently authorized an extended shelf life (from 24 to 30 months) for [Gohibic](#) (vilobelimab), which is authorized for emergency use to treat COVID-19 in certain hospitalized adults. The FDA granted this extension following a thorough review of data submitted by InflaRx GmbH. As a result of this extension, some batches may be

stored for an additional 6 months from the labeled date of expiry. This extension applies to all retained product that has been held in accordance with storage conditions detailed in the authorized [Fact Sheet for Health Care Providers](#) and the [Letter of Authorization](#). More information about the use of Gohibic can be found in the [FDA statement](#) describing the authorization for this product.

- As of Nov. 1, [Virginia's Insurance Marketplace](#) is open for individuals to shop for health care coverage that begins on Jan. 1, 2024. The open enrollment window spans Nov. 1-Jan. 15. The availability of the Virginia portal means that individuals do not need to visit [healthcare.gov](#) to shop for coverage. Virginians can also call 888-687-1501 to speak with representatives at Virginia's Insurance Marketplace call center who are exclusively focused on Virginia's health plans and eligibility policies. The Consumer Assistance Center TTY (TeleType) number is 711. Spanish and additional translation services are also available.
- To provide the health care community with timely information on emerging issues, VHHA will host a quarterly public health webinar series for Virginia hospitals and health systems featuring updates provided by VDH officials. Topics covered in this ongoing webinar series may include disease surveillance, modeling, influenza, RSV, and unique pathogens. Additional topics may vary depending on current events. See more information and register for this series through this [link](#).

[Back](#)

2. Register for Nov. 29 Healthcare Workforce Summit Hosted by VCCS, VHHA, Stakeholder Groups

The **Virginia Community College System (VCCS)** is hosting a Healthcare Summit focused on workforce development and challenges on Nov. 29 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at the **Brightpoint Community College Chester Campus**. The event is being hosted in conjunction with **Virginia Health and Human Resources Secretary John Littel**, the **Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association**, the **Claude Moore Foundation**, the **Virginia Healthcare Association** and **Virginia Center for Assisted Living**, the **Virginia Dental Association**, and the **Virginia Chamber of Commerce**. The goal of the event is to build support among health care organizations and partners in preparation for legislative asks to support health care program offerings by Virginia's Community Colleges to promote workforce development efforts. The Summit will highlight what VCCS is already doing and strategies for scaling health care programs and pipelines across the Commonwealth and the health care spectrum (nursing, allied health, dental, and behavioral health). Participants will be asked to work collaboratively to develop plans to improve accessibility and quality of healthcare programs on a regional basis. See more information about the Summit [here](#) and register for this free event by the Nov. 16 deadline through this [link](#).

[Back](#)

3. HHS Issues Final Rule to Remedy 340B Payment Cuts

HHS recently issued a [final rule](#) explaining how the agency will address payment cuts previously imposed on certain hospitals that participate in the 340B Drug Pricing Program. Those payment cuts were deemed "unlawful" in a previous ruling by the **U.S. Supreme Court**. Under the plan, HHS will repay 340B hospitals that were underpaid from 2018 to 2022 in a single-lump sum payment and will reimburse hospitals the amount they would have received as cost-sharing payments from beneficiaries. Any hospital that believes the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has made an error in calculating its lump-sum payment should contact CMS detailing the error and any supporting documentation by emailing outpatientpps340B@cms.gov by 11:59 p.m. on Nov. 30. HHS also finalized its proposal to

recoup funds from those hospitals that received increased rates for non-drug services from 2018 to 2022. HHS will recoup these funds by adjusting the outpatient prospective payment system conversion factor by minus 0.5 percent starting in calendar year 2026 — one year later than HHS had originally proposed and as AHA strongly advocated in its comments — making this adjustment until the full amount is offset, which the department estimates to be 16 years. In tangentially related news, the **U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)** recently issued a [notice](#) to inform and remind stakeholders of the registration requirements for off-site, outpatient hospital facilities to participate in the 340B Drug Pricing Program. The notice applies to all hospital types that participate in the 340B Program. It requires hospitals in the 340B Program to register off-site outpatient departments, known as child sites, with the 340B Office of Pharmacy Affairs within 90 days in order to access 340B drug pricing. HRSA provided flexibility regarding the registration of 340B child sites during the COVID-19 public health emergency, which ended in May. Three days before the end of the PHE, HRSA issued a notice instructing hospitals to stop purchasing 340B drugs at outpatient facilities that are not yet included in the hospital's Medicare cost report and registered with HRSA.

[Back](#)

4. Virginia Again Recognized as a Top State in the Nation by Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade Scores

Virginia's run as one of the top states in the nation for hospital safety scores continues. The Commonwealth is [second overall among states in the Fall 2023 Leapfrog Group Hospital Safety Grade state rankings](#) that are based on the share of hospitals in each state that earn "A" grades. Last year, Virginia was [second overall in the Fall 2022 rankings](#) and second overall in the [Spring 2022 rankings](#). The Commonwealth has regularly been a high-achieving state in the bi-annual Leapfrog rankings: Virginia was [first overall in the Fall 2021 rankings](#), fourth in Spring 2021, sixth in Fall 2020, third in Fall 2019, second in Spring 2019, third in Fall 2018, and fifth in Spring 2018. The Hospital Safety Grade program assigns letter grades to nearly 3,000 general acute care hospitals across the nation based on safety data from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the Leapfrog Group, and other sources. In the latest rankings, 35 of 69 Virginia general acute care hospitals received an "A" grade, placing the Commonwealth second among states in the nation. Read more [here](#), including a list of all "A" grade Virginia hospitals. — Julian Walker

[Back](#)

5. CMS Issues Hospital OPPTS, Home Health PPS, Physician Fee Schedule Final Rules for 2024

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)** recently issued the hospital outpatient prospective payment system (OPPS) [final rule](#), the home health prospective payment system [final rule](#), and the physician fee schedule (PFS) [final rule](#) for calendar year (CY) 2024. The OPPTS rule increases rates by a net 3.1 percent in CY 2024 compared to 2023. It also creates standardized formats for hospital price transparency files and expands access to behavioral health. The final rule includes new and modified measures for the Quality Reporting Program. The home health prospective payment system final rule will increase home health payments by a net \$140 million, or 0.8 percent, in calendar year 2024, relative to the year prior. The PFS rule finalizes a 3.4 percent reduction in CY 2024 payments from the CY 2023 levels. It also withdraws all regulations related to the Appropriate Use Criteria program and delays for at least one year the requirement that practitioners who render telehealth services from their home report their home address on enrollment and claims forms. And the rule includes changes related to the Medicare Shared Savings Program and Quality Payment Program, both of which were created by the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015. — Jay Andrews

[Back](#)

6. VHHA *Patients Come First* Podcast Features UVA Health Sports Medicine Physician, Surgeon

The latest episode of VHHA's *Patients Come First* podcast features an interview with **Dr. Mark Miller**, a professor of orthopaedic surgery and a sports medicine specialist at **UVA Health**, for a conversation about his military career, work as a collegiate team physician, a book he co-authored on supporting healthy young athletes, and more. Listen to the episode [here](#) and hear past episodes through this [link](#). Podcast episodes are also available through these podcast apps and networks: [Apple Podcast](#), [Amazon Music](#), [Spotify](#), [Pandora](#), [Google Podcasts](#), [Stitcher](#), [TuneIn](#), [SoundCloud](#), [Blubrry](#), [iHeart Radio](#), [Deezer](#), [Podbay](#), [Overcast](#), [Pocket Casts](#), the [Virginia Audio Collective](#), the [Public Health Podcast Network](#), the [World Podcast Network](#), and the [Family Podcast Network](#). The podcast can also be heard on the radio airwaves – episodes air each Saturday at noon and Sunday at 10 a.m. on 100.5 FM, 107.7 FM, 92.7 FM, and 820 AM across Central Virginia and 1650 AM in Hampton Roads, and Wednesdays at 1 p.m. on 93.9 FM in Richmond. Send questions, comments, feedback, or guest suggestions to pcfpodcast@vhha.com.
– Will Selden

[Back](#)

7. Qualivis to Host Dec. 1 Webinar on the Value of Virtual Nursing

Qualivis, a **VHHA Shared Services** partner, is hosting a webinar at 1 p.m. on Dec. 1 focused on health systems in the midst of shifting towards virtual nursing, a novel approach to care that has the potential to elevate patient experience, enhance nurse job satisfaction, and yield substantial operational and financial advantages for health care organizations. Register for the webinar [here](#).

[Back](#)

8. VHHA, VCCRN to Host Nov. 15 Biotech and Beer Networking Event

Registration is now open for a scheduled Nov. 15 Biotech and Beer networking event hosted by VHHA and the **Virginia Coordinated Clinical Research Network (VCCRN)** and sponsored by **VCU TechTransfer and Ventures**, **Activation Capital**, **Virginia Bio**, **VA Bio-Connect**, and **Go Virginia**. Richmond is home to a robust network of biotech, pharma, medical device, health care, and life science professionals. This event will bring together Richmond life science innovators from start-ups, academia, and industry along with regional ecosystem builders. It is scheduled for 4:30-6:30 p.m. on Nov. 15 at VHHA offices, 4200 Innslake Dr., Glen Allen, VA 23060. Register for the event [here](#). – Lara D'Antonio

[Back](#)

9. HHS Issues Threat Alert Following Recent Cyberattack on U.S. Health Care Facility

The **HHS Office of Information Security** is alerting health care organizations about the potential threat of the ransomware gang, 8Base, following a recent attack on a U.S. medical facility. 8Base is a data-extortion cybercrime operation rather than a ransomware operation. The group engages in double extortion tactics as an affiliate of Ransomware-as-a-Service (RaaS) groups against mostly small- to medium-sized companies. While similarities exist between 8Base and other ransomware gangs, the group's identity, methods, and motivations remain largely unknown. Read the alert [here](#). In related news, the **Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)**, **FBI**, and the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center recently alerted organizations to a critical vulnerability affecting certain

versions of the Atlassian Confluence Data Center and Server that enables malicious actors to obtain access to victim systems and continue active exploitation post-patch. The agencies strongly encourage network administrators to immediately apply the recommended upgrades and recommended responses to indicators of compromise. The FBI and CISA also recently released updated recommendations to [protect against AvosLocker ransomware](#). Federal agencies have also offered recent guidance to help organizations reduce the risk of [ransomware](#) and [phishing](#) attacks, as well as [guidance for software manufacturers](#).

[Back](#)

10. Around the State

UVA Health has received the “Most Wired” award from the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives, which conducts a national survey of health organizations to assess the integration and impact of technology in healthcare. On a scale of 1-10, UVA Health was rated a 9 in both inpatient and outpatient care. Read more [here](#). – Salinna Lor

[Back](#)
