

FYI Weekly

HEALTH CARE NEWS FOR VIRGINIA'S HOSPITALS AND HEALTH SYSTEMS

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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:

- State and federal policymakers, with support from the hospital community, have passed a series of laws protecting patients and families from surprise medical bills, promoting health insurance and hospital price transparency, and enabling people to get good faith price estimates prior to scheduled hospital procedures. Yet the vast majority of Virginians don't know these consumer-friendly reforms exist to benefit them, according to [statewide polling](#) and focus group research conducted this year by the Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association (VHHA). To address that information gap, VHHA has launched the "[Control Your Care](#)" public awareness campaign to ensure patients and families know their rights to help them make informed medical decisions. The campaign includes a website, ControlYourCare.com, with easy-to-understand information about consumer-focused health care reforms, links to state and federal laws regarding good faith price estimates, insurance and health care price transparency, surprise medical bills as well as descriptions of what the laws do, and other tools to serve the public. This campaign will be supported with statewide digital and broadcast advertising to help raise public awareness about the availability of these resources. Read more [here](#).
- This month, VHHA hosted the inaugural meeting of the **VHHA Cybersecurity Committee**, a group comprised of senior or executive level cybersecurity professionals at VHHA-member hospitals and health systems. Meetings will be held on a bimonthly basis and the focus of the Committee's work is on hospital-related cybersecurity concerns, best practices, procedures and protocols, and related issues. Member hospitals and health systems are welcome to nominate

staff members to serve on the Committee. Please direct any questions to Ryan Lodata at rlodata@vhha.com.

- The **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)** and the **U.S. Departments of Labor and Treasury** have issued a [final rule](#) that increases the administrative fee for disputes initiated under the *No Surprises Act* independent dispute resolution (IDR) process from \$50 to \$115 per party per dispute. The departments also finalized an increase to the fee range for certified IDR entities to \$200-\$840 for single determinations and \$268-\$1,173 for batched determinations. IDR entities will have discretion to increase the fee for batched disputes with more than 25 line items at a rate of \$75-\$250 per increment of 25 line items. The changes take effect for disputes initiated on or after 30 days after publication of the final rule in the Federal Register, which is anticipated to occur within the next week. These fees will remain in effect until changed by subsequent notice-and-comment rulemaking. The rule was developed following a federal court decision earlier this year that vacated a nationwide a federal fee increase and batching rule for the IDR process for certain out-of-network providers and group health plans on the grounds that they violated the Administrative Procedures Act’s notice-and-comment requirement. Read more [here](#). In related news, the independent dispute resolution portal for the No Surprises Act has been reopened to process all dispute types, including previously initiated batched disputes, new batched disputes, and new single disputes involving air ambulance services. The deadline to initiate a new batched dispute or a new single dispute involving air ambulance services has also been extended to March 14, 2024. Read more [here](#).
- The **Virginia Nurses Association (VNA)** has 15 grant-supported nursing scholarship opportunities available for participants in the 2024 Virginia Nurse Leadership Academy. The program, which is presented by the Virginia Nurses Foundation with scholarship support from VDH, is accepting 35 total fellows. This is the second year for the Academy, which has already graduated more than 30 accomplished fellows. Read more about the program and apply through this [link](#). The application deadline is Jan. 5.
- The **U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** recently approved belzutifan (Welireg, Merck & Co., Inc.) for patients with advanced renal cell carcinoma (RCC) following a programmed death receptor-1 (PD-1) or programmed death-ligand 1 (PD-L1) inhibitor and a vascular endothelial growth factor tyrosine kinase inhibitor (VEGF-TKI). Read more [here](#).
- Registration is open for the fourth annual Regional Human Trafficking Summit hosted by the **Regional Interdisciplinary Collaborative Working to Disrupt Human Trafficking (RIC)**, a multi-state non-profit group that brings together academics, advocates, caregivers, clinicians, law enforcement, survivors, and other stakeholders who are working to end human trafficking. The theme of the Summit, which is scheduled for Feb. 7-8, 2024 at the **VCU School of Medicine**, is “Expanding Community Partnerships to Address Human Trafficking.” Registration is available through this [link](#) (the early bird rate ends Jan. 5, 2024) and information about sponsorship opportunities is available [here](#).
- VHHA actively engages with the news media to share public messaging and coordinate member media appearances to showcase the important work done by Virginia hospitals. That includes recent coverage from [SWVA Today](#), [WHRO](#), and [Governing](#).

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2. Registration Available for VNPC 2024 Webinar Series

The **Virginia Neonatal Perinatal Collaborative (VNPC)** is offering two free webinar series focused on maternal and child health in 2024. One is centered on 2SLGBTQIA+ mental health and reproductive care.

Webinars in that series are held every third Thursday of the month from 12-1 p.m. from January-May 2024. Register for that series [here](#). The other is the VNPC 2024 monthly webinar series held the third Tuesday of each month from 12-1 p.m. Webinars in this series focus on relevant topics in maternal and infant health in Virginia. Register [here](#).

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3. State Corporation Commission Posts Provider Complaint Procedure Resources Online

The **Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC)** has updated its website to provide resources for health care providers who submit complaints alleging insurer noncompliance with applicable laws and regulations. Under the [law](#), the SCC **Bureau of Insurance (BOI)** investigates all complaints and, following subsequent investigations, reports its findings and any resulting action to the complainants. The provider complaint procedures can be accessed online [here](#) under the “File Your Complaint/Appeal by Mail or Fax (Complaint Forms)” section.

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4. Registration Open for 2024 Virginia Patient Safety Summit in February

Registration is open for the **2024 Virginia Patient Safety Summit**, which will be held as a virtual event on Feb. 22, 2024 from 9:30 a.m.-3:45 p.m. Having an innovative mindset in health care is in high demand right now. Health care delivery innovation is necessary to find new ways to improve quality, enhance the patient experience, expand safety initiatives, increase efficiency, and reduce costs. As hospitals and health systems pursue innovative solutions in all aspects of their care delivery and quality and safety improvement efforts, they are making real strides toward what the industry refers to as “quadruple aim” – higher quality of patient care with improved and equitable outcomes, increased value for both the patient and provider, improved patient satisfaction and an improved care provider experience. The 2024 Virginia Patient Safety Summit will highlight the progress being made in that regard in Virginia and across the nation. Keynote speakers for the 2024 Summit include: **Dr. Aditi Mallick**, the Acting Director of the **CMS Office of Minority Health**, and **Bonnie Clipper**, DNP, MA, MBA, RN, CENP, FACHE, FAAN, an internationally recognized nurse futurist and nursing innovation expert. Registration for the 2024 Virginia Patient Safety Summit is free for staff and providers associated with Virginia hospitals and health systems, members of Virginia Patient Safety Summit partner organizations (Medical Society of Virginia, the Virginia Nurses Association, and the Virginia Pharmacists Association), federal and state health partner organizations and event sponsor organizations and students. Others may register for a fee of \$95. Visit this [link](#) for more details and event registration. To register, you may need to reset your password or create a new one (if you do not already have an account). Contact events@vhha.com if you encounter trouble registering an account or creating a new password. – Abraham Segres and Kristie Burnette

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5. CMS Issues Proposed Rule on Appeals Processes for Medicare Enrollees

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)** recently issued a [proposed rule](#) to provide additional appeals processes for Medicare beneficiaries in certain circumstances. The proposed rule stems from a nationwide class action case filed in 2011 and affirmed by the **U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit** in January 2022 that ordered the HHS Secretary to establish additional appeals processes for Medicare beneficiaries who were admitted as an inpatient but whose status changed to

outpatient during a hospital stay. The proposed appeals processes include an expedited appeal for beneficiaries who appeal their hospital status during their stay, a standard appeal for beneficiaries who appeal after discharge from the hospital, and a retrospective appeal for beneficiaries involved in the class action suit.

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6. VHHA *Patients Come First* Podcast Features Sheltering Arms Institute Leader

The latest episode of VHHA's *Patients Come First* podcast features an interview with **Alan Lombardo**, Chief Executive Officer of **Sheltering Arms Institute**, for a conversation about physical therapy, rehabilitation work with seriously wounded military veterans, the expansion of Sheltering Arms Institute, 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

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7. AHA to Host Rural Health Care Leadership Conference in February

Rural hospital leaders, along with leaders at health systems with rural health care services, are encouraged to attend the American Hospital Association (AHA) [Rural Health Care Leadership Conference](#) scheduled for Feb. 11-14, 2024, in Orlando, FL. The conference brings together leaders from across the country for peer-to-peer networking, as well as to offer strategies and resources that will help leaders tackle rural health challenges and learn about innovative approaches to transform care delivery and business practices. Learn more and register [here](#).

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8. CMS Corrects 2024 OPPS Rate for Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy

CMS recently corrected a technical error in the displayed calendar year 2024 outpatient prospective payment system payment rate for APC 5061 (Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy). According to the CMS online OPPS payment file, the corrected Medicare payment rate for hyperbaric oxygen therapy, starting Jan. 1, 2024, is now listed as \$132.21, rather than the \$73.64 indicated in the final rule. View the updated payment file for [OPPS](#) and for [ASCs](#).

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9. VDH to Host Several Sessions on Mpox Training for Providers in Early 2024

The **Virginia Department of Health** (VDH) is hosting a series of educational training sessions for health care providers regarding updated information and lessons learned from the 2022-2023 Mpox outbreak. The sessions will highlight the epidemiology of the outbreak and the risk of reemergence, prevention and control strategies, and vaccination and communication strategies. Four sessions are scheduled, and

each will be held from 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. on the following dates and locations: Fairfax VDOT on Jan. 23, Double Tree Hotel Charlottesville on Jan. 31, Wytheville Community College on Feb. 8, and the Hyatt Place Chesapeake on Feb. 14. Information about continuing education credit available to participants can be viewed online [here](#). Registration is required through this [link](#).

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10. Around the State

Tab Culbertson, President of **Centra Lynchburg General Hospital** and **Virginia Baptist Hospital**, has been elected to serve as an at-large delegate of the Regional Policy Board 3 (Southeastern United States) with the **American Hospital Association** (AHA). Read more [here](#). – Salinna Lor

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