

# 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:

- VHHA held a meeting of the **Executive Committee** of the **Board of Directors** this week for a discussion of issues of importance to hospital and health system members.
- In accordance with **Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)** requirements, the **Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS)** is working with the provider community, managed care organizations (MCO), and the agency's provider services solutions (PRSS) vendor, Gainwell Technologies, to accomplish timely provider revalidations. All Medicaid providers, including MCO network providers, are required to revalidate provider enrollment in PRSS at least every five years. PRSS revalidation is when a provider submits a revalidation application for a Provider/National Provider Identifier (NPI) that has an existing enrollment record in PRSS prior to the end of their enrollment period without an enrollment gap. Providers should receive a DMAS notice to begin their revalidation applications at least 90 days before the end of their enrollment period. The notice is sent via e-mail or U.S. Mail depending on a provider's communications preferences recorded in PRSS. Reminder notices are also sent via e-mail from [appshcproductNoReply@gainwelltechnologies.com](mailto:appshcproductNoReply@gainwelltechnologies.com) at 60 and 30 days prior to the deadline. Providers must submit the revalidation electronically through the [Provider Services Solution \(PRSS\) portal](#). DMAS has implemented a new Manage Revalidation panel within the PRSS portal. This panel displays a list in-process revalidation application tracking numbers (ATNs) for the base identification number and any locations for whom that provider may be an authorized administrator (AA) for a primary account holder. The new panel provides information required to access the revalidation application without having to match up numerous notification emails.

It also provides a link directly into the resume/revalidate enrollment page to reset a password if needed. The Provider Portal User Guide PRSS-120 is located on the [MES Provider Training webpage](#) and has information on the new manage revalidation panel. Additional information is available on the [MES MCO Provider Network Resources webpage](#).

- VHHA recently hosted an installment of its quarterly public health webinar series for hospitals and health systems featuring updates from the **Virginia Department of Health (VDH)**. Topics covered in this webinar series may include disease surveillance, modeling, influenza, RSV, and unique pathogens, among others. Additional topics may vary depending on current events. Each quarterly webinar in the series will be held at noon EST. View a recording of this week's webinar and presentation slides [here](#) and [here](#). Register for the next webinar in the series, scheduled for June 5, through this [link](#).
- **CommerceHealthcare®**, a **VHHA Solutions** endorsed partner, has released its *2024 Healthcare Finance Trends*, an annual report that presents a set of themes that capture the positive momentum, significant challenges, and major strategies for provider organizations in 2024 and beyond. The themes explore four areas: finance, patient financial experience, automation, and advanced technology and collaboration/trust as strategic context. The trends identified reflect the analysis of a broad spectrum of industry data and perspectives. View the report [here](#).
- The **Virginia Neonatal Perinatal Collaborative (VNPC)** is hosting the 2024 Day of Learning event March 17-18 at The Westin Richmond. The theme for this year's event is "Connecting the Dots: Data to Action" and programming will focus on the connection between two pillars of maternal and infant health improvement work: data and evidence-based action. A wide array of experts will speak on topics relevant to maternal and infant health in Virginia, emphasizing how data broadens our understanding of the problems we are facing, the progress we have made, and how to best move forward. Learn more and register [here](#).
- The **Virginia Department of Health (VDH)** has provided updated information about funding available to health care providers through the [Nurse Preceptor Incentive Program](#). Hospital team members who serve as preceptors may be eligible to apply for available funding in addition to any incremental salary/rate that may be provided to those serving as a preceptor. Expansion of the program was a key workforce legislative agenda item for 2024, resulting in increased funding available in the state fiscal year 2024 budget as well as updated language allowing preceptors for RNs to be eligible for the programs. Preceptors may apply on a rolling basis. Program questions may be directed to [olivette.burroughs@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:olivette.burroughs@vdh.virginia.gov) or (804) 864-7431.
- VHHA, VNPC, and other partner organizations are hosting a free, five-part monthly webinar series focused on public-facing maternal and infant health data sources that organizations can use for research, quality improvement, grant applications, and more. The webinar series has been designed for hospital and community partners and will feature presentations from representatives of VHHA, VNPC, the **Virginia Department of Health (VDH)**, the **Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS)**, and **Virginia Health Information (VHI)**. The first webinar in the series was held this month. Visit this [link](#) to register and read more [here](#).
- The **Virginia Infection Prevention Training Center (VIPTC)** has released a new round of infection prevention and control training videos that use animation to convey information about infection prevention and control topics that are important for health care professionals to know. The latest videos include *Staying Safe in the Splash Zone* and *Donning & Doffing*. Access the videos [here](#) or visit the VIPTC [website](#) to learn more.
- "The Future of Medicine Now" is the title of an upcoming half-day symposium for health care professionals scheduled to be held March 23 at the Westin Hotel – Richmond. The conference

will focus on the latest in leading-edge technology and research in cardiology and vascular medicine. Topics include treatment for arrhythmia, heart failure, valvular disease, vascular disease, and current research at **HCA Virginia**. The target audience includes physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, technologists, pharmacists, and emergency medical service providers. Continuing medical education credits will be provided. Visit this [link](#) for more information.

- The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC) recently issued updated recommendations for individuals to protect against respiratory viruses including COVID-19. The new guidance indicates individuals who test positive no longer need to isolate for five days. CDC indicates the guidance brings a unified approach to addressing risks from a range of common respiratory viral illnesses, such as COVID-19, flu, and RSV, which can cause significant health impacts and strain on hospitals and health care workers. CDC is updating the recommendations as the U.S. is experiencing fewer hospitalizations and deaths associated with COVID-19. When people get sick with a respiratory virus, the updated guidance recommends that they stay home and away from others. For people with COVID-19 and influenza, treatment is available and can lessen symptoms and lower the risk of severe illness. The recommendations suggest returning to normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, symptoms are improving overall, and if a fever was present, it has been gone without use of a fever-reducing medication. Once people resume normal activities, they are encouraged to employ additional prevention strategies for the next five days to curb disease spread, such as taking more steps for cleaner air, enhancing hygiene practices, wearing a well-fitting mask, keeping a distance from others, and/or getting tested for respiratory viruses. Read more [here](#).

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## 2. State Budget Summary and Potential Next Steps in the Legislative Process

Virginia has a budget. The degree to which the version of the two-year state spending plan recently approved by the **Virginia General Assembly** is changed by **Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin** remains to be seen. The budget legislation approved by lawmakers earlier this month is a plan that sets out state expenditures and programmatic priorities for a two-year period beginning July 1, 2024. It includes several items of interest to the hospital community. Not included in the budget are provisions to support the creation of a proposed professional sports arena complex in Alexandria, VA. Establishing the complex as a new home for Washington, D.C.-based professional basketball and hockey teams is a priority for Governor Youngkin. The current expectation is that the Governor, who has 30 days to review and modify the budget through amendments and line-item vetoes, will make significant changes to the budget, including modifications to advance the arena project. The General Assembly is scheduled to return to Richmond on April 17 for a one-day reconvened session to consider legislative amendments sent down by the Governor. If an accord isn't reached on budget amendments that day, the potential exists for the Governor to call the General Assembly back for a legislative special session primarily focused on crafting a new state budget. The current version of the budget incorporates several health care-related provisions such as:

- The reallocation of \$10 million in state fiscal year (SFY) 2025 funding from Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Programs and similar models to other behavioral health initiatives, such as STEP-VA, discharge planning, and housing supports.
- In behavioral health, \$25 million over two years to expand and modernize the comprehensive crisis services system.

- \$9.4 million over the biennium to expand alternative transportation and custody programs to individuals under a temporary detention order (TDO).
- \$10 million in SFY 25 for one-time costs to establish additional mobile crisis services in underserved areas as a continuation of funding that was approved in Sept. 2023.
- \$30.5 million over the biennium to combat the opioid epidemic in the Commonwealth.
- On health care workforce development, the budget includes \$8 million over the biennium to continue the Earn to Learn Nursing Education Acceleration program, as well as \$14.7 million over the biennium for Virginia’s Behavioral Health Loan Repayment Program. This helps expand the program to add child and adolescent psychiatry fellows to the list of Tier 1 providers eligible for the program, add Tier III providers who are mental health professionals who do not already qualify for the program, and to add academic medical centers as a preferred practice site.
- \$1 million over the biennium to add 10 graduate medical education (GME) residency slots for OB/GYN services.
- \$7 million over the biennium for the Nursing Preceptor Incentive Program.
- \$3.8 million over the biennium for nursing scholarships, loan repayment, and incentive programs to recruit and retain nurses and nurse faculty.
- To address projected growth in Medicaid enrollment and costs, the budget sets aside \$150 million in reserves in the event of unexpected increases in Medicaid expenditures.
- The budget includes \$4.8 million over the biennium to increase reimbursement rates for durable medical equipment.
- Language in the budget directs the **Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS)** to convene a workgroup to evaluate current disproportionate share hospital (DSH) criteria for hospitals to qualify for a disproportionate share of hospital payments. The workgroup will recommend a new Medicaid inpatient utilization threshold and report its findings to the Governor and the Chairs of the **House Appropriations Committee** and the **Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee**.

As budget deliberations occur, the **VHHA Government Relations Team** will continue its vigorous engagement with legislators and the Youngkin Administration to advocate for budgetary action that supports Virginia hospitals, health systems, and community health in the Commonwealth. This activity will occur between now and the reconvened session in April and continue beyond that in the event of a special session being called. – Julie Dime

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### 3. Register for the 2024 Virginia Healthcare Workforce Summit on March 19

Register for the upcoming **2024 Virginia Healthcare Workforce Summit** scheduled for March 19 (9:15 a.m.-3:30 p.m.) as a virtual event. The Summit theme is “Strengthening the Healthcare Workforce through Innovation and Purpose” and will focus on opportunities to invest in, realign, and refocus efforts to support and strengthen the health care workforce. Summit programming will feature strategies for attracting and retaining talent in the post-pandemic workplace, effective strategies for promoting employee well-being and safety, streamlining processes with rapidly advancing technologies including Artificial Intelligence, and upskilling and career advancement opportunities as a win-win for the workforce and employers. This is a virtual event that is free to staff members of Virginia hospitals and students. Register for the Summit through this [link](#) using the e-mail address of the person attending so they can receive verification codes the day of the event to ensure smooth access to the virtual event platform. Please send any event or registration questions to [events@vhha.com](mailto:events@vhha.com). – Sharon Alexander

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#### 4. Register for the Virginia Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Summit, April 24 in Richmond

[Registration is open](#) for the **2024 Virginia Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Summit**, which is scheduled for April 24 at The Westin – Richmond and hosted by VHHA. The theme for this year’s Summit is “Human Caused Incidents” and it will feature speakers, panelists, sponsors, and support organizations focused on how the Virginia health care community can strengthen its preparedness for such situations. Participants can earn up to 5.75 **ACHE Qualifying Education Hours** toward initial certification or recertification of the **Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives (FACHE)** designation. Up to 6.0 hours of **EMT Continuing Education (CE)** credits are also being offered to qualified participants. Visit this [link](#) for more information and contact Isaac Rife at [irife@vhha.com](mailto:irife@vhha.com) to learn about sponsorship opportunities. The \$75 event registration ticket includes in-person attendance to the Summit, continental breakfast, and lunch. VHHA extends its thanks to the generous sponsors whose support helps keep the ticket price low to promote access and inclusion. – Trey Brooke and Matt Allen

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#### 5. HHS, CMS Announces Flexibilities to Assist Providers Amid Change Healthcare Cyberattack Fallout

The **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)** and the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)** are alerting health care providers about options that can support them in maintaining cash flow and serving patients amid the ongoing impact of the cyberattack on **Change Healthcare** (a division of **UnitedHealth Group**) that began Feb. 21. Many health care providers and facilities have voiced concerns stemming from an inability to submit claims and receive payments for care rendered due to the inaccessibility of Change systems. The flexibilities recently announced by HHS and CMS are related to Medicare, Medicaid, and CHIP, Medicare Advantage organizations, and Medicare Administrative Contractors. Read the list of flexibilities [here](#). CMS has made available Change Healthcare/Optum Payment Disruption (CHOPD) accelerated payments to Part A providers and advance payments to Part B suppliers experiencing claims disruptions as a result of the incident. The CHOPD accelerated and advance payments may be granted in amounts representative of up to thirty (30) days of claims payments to eligible providers and suppliers. Read more [here](#). In related news, **HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra** issued a letter to health care providers detailing steps being taken by the federal government in response to the current situation. Read the letter [here](#). Additional status updates from UnitedHealth Group can be found [here](#). Information on the Optum Temporary Funding Assistance Program for providers is available [here](#). Providers are also encouraged to continue to work with all their payers on workarounds that can be implemented to receive timely payments. – Craig Connors

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#### 6. VHHA *Patients Come First* Podcast Features Clinch Valley Health Nurse Leader

The latest episode of VHHA’s *Patients Come First* podcast features **Theresa Blankenship**, Director of Women and Infant Services at **Clinch Valley Health**. She joins us for a conversation about her nursing career, rural health care, and the work of the Clinch Valley team during an emergency situation involving a mother giving birth during a medical crisis. 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](mailto:pcfpodcast@vhha.com). – Julian Walker

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## 7. VNPC Requests Participation in Anonymous Survey on Maternal and Infant Care

The **Virginia Neonatal Perinatal Collaborative** (VNPC) is seeking participation in a brief, anonymous survey to assess health care providers' knowledge of maternal and infant health levels of care in hospitals. Information gathered by the survey will help inform future quality improvement projects impacting maternal and infant health outcomes in Virginia. March 19 is the deadline for the survey, which can be accessed through this [link](#).

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## 8. VHHA Solutions Partner ChartSpan to Host Webinar on Medicare Chronic Care Management

[VHHA Solutions](#) and its endorsed partner, [ChartSpan](#), are presenting a webinar on Wednesday, March 27 at noon on the topic of "Mastering Chronic Care Management in a Changing Landscape." More than two-thirds (68 percent) of Medicare beneficiaries have two or more chronic conditions, which can lead to greater risk of hospitalization and negative health outcomes. Chronic Care Management, a Medicare program that focuses on patients with multiple chronic conditions, may be able to help break through these barriers and empower patients to actively manage their health, improve their quality of life, and ultimately reduce their health care costs. The upcoming webinar will explore the practical intricacies of CCM, address reimbursement changes for 2024, and some challenges with establishing a CCM program. Webinar attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions about setting up CCM programs as well as the benefits and challenges of running a program independently or with a CCM provider. The webinar will demonstrate why many health care practices use CCM to provide patients with coordinated care and empower them to take control of their health. Read more about the webinar and register [here](#).

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## 9. FDA Approves New Indication for Medication to Reduce Risk of Serious Cardiovascular Events

The **U.S. Food and Drug Administration** (FDA) recently approved a new indication for use of the Wegovy (semaglutide) injection to reduce the risk of cardiovascular death, heart attack, and stroke in adults with cardiovascular disease with either obesity or who are overweight. Wegovy should be used in addition to a reduced calorie diet and increased physical activity. Cardiovascular disease is a group of diseases of the heart and blood vessels. Read more [here](#).

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## 10. Around the State

**Dr. Carol Shapiro**, MD, MBA, FACS, Director of **Sentara Northern Virginia Medical Center's Wound Healing Center**, has been honored with the 2024 Charles J. Colgan Visionary Award from the **Prince William Chamber of Commerce**. Read more [here](#).

**Sentara Health** has named **Eric Conley** to the new role of Executive Vice President and President of Acute and Post-Acute Care. Conley is currently President of the South Region of Froedtert ThedaCare Health and President of Froedtert Hospital. He will join Sentara on April 29. – Salinna Lor

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