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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:

- This week, VHHA hosted the **2024 Virginia Healthcare Workforce Summit** on March 19 as a virtual event. The Summit theme was "Strengthening the Healthcare Workforce through Innovation and Purpose" and its programming focused on opportunities to invest in, realign, and refocus efforts to support and strengthen the health care workforce. Summit programming featured 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. Read more [here](#).
- VHHA held a meeting of the **Payor Advisory Committee** this week. The Committee is a forum for hospital payor relations and revenue cycle leaders to discuss priority issues and ongoing payor-related challenges.
- This week, VHHA hosted a meeting of the **Chief Nursing Officers Forum**, which is a group of nursing leaders from hospitals across the Commonwealth.
- The **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** recently issued a [final rule](#) that will require significantly reduced emissions from commercial facilities that sterilize medical devices and other equipment using ethylene oxide gas. Among other changes, the rule will require continuous monitoring and reporting of such emissions and strengthen requirements for certain types of emissions that are not currently regulated, such as room air emissions. The EPA will give commercial sterilizers additional time to come into compliance with the requirements and will

apply emission percentage reduction targets that vary by a facility's level of emissions. Read more [here](#).

- As part of the first federal campaign to address health care worker burnout, the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)** recently released an evidence-informed and actionable guide for the nation's hospital leaders to improve health care worker wellbeing. The [Impact Wellbeing™ Guide: Taking Action to Improve Healthcare Worker Wellbeing](#) report is the newest addition to the *Impact Wellbeing™* Campaign [launched in October 2023](#). It provides a step-by-step process for hospitals to start making organizational-level changes to impact and improve mental health for employees.
- 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.
- 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](#).
- "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.

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2. CHKD Shares Process for Requesting Direct Admission for Pediatric Psychiatric Patients

Children’s Pavilion (CPAV) is a 60-bed inpatient psychiatric hospital and outpatient center for children owned and operated by **Children’s Hospital of The King’s Daughters**. The Pavilion is a new, free-standing facility located on the same Norfolk campus as CHKD’s main hospital. Providers from community emergency departments seeking to refer patients for direct admission to Children’s Pavilion should send psychiatric evaluation and medical clearance information to the following dedicated fax line: CPAV Direct Admissions at (757) 668-2047. CPAV intake nurses will review the information and communicate directly with referring ED providers until the clinical information is complete, and a determination to accept or deny the patient is made. If CPAV is able to admit the patient, the intake nurse will work with the nurse from the referring facility to arrange needed consents/signatures and transport. All communication regarding admission is with the CPAV intake nurse at (757) 668-4746. Read more [here](#).

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3. CMS Offers States Guidance on Medicaid Payments Due to Change Healthcare Cyberattack

In a recently issued bulletin, the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)** is encouraging states to make interim payments to fee-for-service providers to mitigate the effects of the Change Healthcare cyberattack and to prevent disruption of Medicaid beneficiaries’ access to services and the associated negative health outcomes. Interim payments should use current state plan rates and are limited to expected utilization of allowable services based on provider-specific recent utilization history. CMS clarifies that these are not advance payments. Interim payments must be finalized after functionality has been restored. Interim payments also must meet all documentation requirements, including the requirement that payments are made for allowable services that are affected by the Change Healthcare cyberattack. States are required to submit a state plan amendment (SPA) for expedited CMS approval. The bulletin outlines what information should be in the SPA, including a provider-specific methodology to reconcile interim payments once functionality has been restored to claims processing systems. CMS encourages states to submit SPAs by March 31, 2024, or notify CMS of their intention to submit a SPA by April 10, 2024. The interim methodology can be made effective retroactively to the first date of disruption due to the cyberattack and must sunset no later than June 30, 2024. CMS also describes the additional flexibilities it will grant to states to expedite the SPA approval, as well as the requirements and responsibilities states must meet for approval. States can begin to draw down federal matching funds once a SPA is submitted. Read more [here](#).

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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 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. VDH Offers Updated Mpox Waste Management Guidance

The **Virginia Department of Health** (VDH) is providing updates on the Clade I Monkeypox virus (MPXV) [outbreak](#) in the Democratic Republic of Congo as it continues. Although there have been no Clade I MPXV infections in the U.S. and the risk is low, it is important for the health care community to be prepared for Clade I infections, including more severe cases. Vaccines and treatments are expected to be effective for both Clade I and Clade II MPXV. As of March 11, 2024, all mpox [diagnostic samples and clinical waste](#) can be managed as Category B infectious substances unless they contain or are contaminated with cultures of Clade I MPXV.

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6. VHHA *Patients Come First* Podcast Highlights Loss, Healing with Sentara Bereavement Coordinator

The latest episode of VHHA's *Patients Come First* podcast features an interview with **Deborah Floyd**, a nurse and Perinatal Bereavement Coordinator with **Sentara Health**. The conversation covers her career, how her current work is informed and inspired by personal experience with loss, wellness for health care professionals, 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.
– Salinna Lor

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7. FDA Approves Gene Therapy Treatment for Metachromatic Leukodystrophy

The **U.S. Food and Drug Administration** (FDA) recently approved Lenmeldy (atidarsagene autotemcel), as the first FDA-approved gene therapy indicated for the treatment of children with pre-symptomatic late infantile, pre-symptomatic early juvenile or early symptomatic early juvenile metachromatic leukodystrophy (MLD). Metachromatic leukodystrophy is a debilitating, rare genetic disease affecting the brain and nervous system. It is caused by a deficiency of an enzyme called arylsulfatase A (ARSA) that results in a buildup of sulfatides (fatty substances) in the cells. This buildup causes damage to the central and peripheral nervous system, manifesting with loss of motor and cognitive function and early death. It is estimated that MLD affects one in every 40,000 individuals in the U.S. There is no cure for MLD, and treatment typically focuses on supportive care and symptom management. Read more [here](#).

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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. Medicaid Providers Required to Revalidate Enrollment with DMAS Provider Service Solutions Portal

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 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](#).

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10. Around the State

Patricia Kinser, PhD, has been named Interim Dean of the **VCU School of Nursing**. Kinser is an endowed professor and currently serves as assistant dean for research in scholarship and innovation at the school. Read more [here](#).

Heather Causseaux has been named Vice President of Operations for **Sentara Northern Virginia Medical Center**, according to [reporting by Inside Nova](#). She joined Sentara in 2017 as Service Line Director and previously worked for Sentara Medical Group as a nurse practitioner. She earned bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing at George Mason University.

Dr. Debra Lee has been named Chief Medical Officer for **Sentara Northern Virginia Medical Center**, according to [reporting by Inside Nova](#). She joined Sentara in 2016 as the site medical director for the emergency department and was appointed President of the Sentara Northern Virginia Medical Center medical staff in 2023. Lee completed her EMS Fellowship with the Fire Department of New York and her emergency medicine residency at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital. She earned her doctor of medicine and bachelor of arts degrees at the University of Virginia.

Children's National Hospital has named **Dr. Wayne J. Franklin**, MD, FACC, as Senior Vice President of the Children's National Heart Center. He currently serves as Co-Director, Medical Director of Quality and Endowed Chair in the Center for Heart Care and Associate Director of the Adult Congenital Heart Disease Program at Phoenix Children's. He's also a professor of Child Health, Medicine, and Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Arizona College of Medicine – Phoenix. Dr. Franklin is a graduate of Williams College in Williamstown, MA, and the UCLA School of Medicine. He completed his residency training in internal medicine and pediatrics at Duke University and two simultaneous fellowships in adult cardiology and pediatric cardiology at St. Luke's/Texas Heart Institute and at the Baylor College of Medicine/Texas Children's Hospital. Read more [here](#).

Children's National Hospital has named **Dr. Nathan Kuppermann**, MD, MPH, as its new Executive Vice President, Chief Academic Officer, and Chair of Pediatrics. He comes to Children's National from UC Davis Health and the UC Davis School of Medicine. Dr. Kuppermann earned his undergraduate degree from Stanford University, his medical degree from the UC San Francisco School of Medicine, and his Master of Public Health degree from the Harvard School of Public Health. He completed a pediatrics residency and chief residency at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center and a fellowship in pediatric emergency medicine at Boston Children's Hospital. Read more [here](#).

Children's National Hospital has named **Dr. Jacqueline M. Saito**, MD, MSCI, MBA, as its new Chief Quality and Safety Officer and Vice President for Medical Affairs. She joins Children's National after 15 years at Washington University where she was Associate Professor of Surgery and Associate Medical Director of Supply and Resource Stewardship at the BJC Healthcare Center for Clinical Excellence. Read more [here](#). – Salinna Lor

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