

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 weekly legislative briefing call for its **Board of Directors** and convened a meeting of the **Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Advocacy Committee (VHHAC)** for discussions about pending legislation, policy, and budgetary issues before the **Virginia General Assembly**.
- This week, VHHA 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](#).
- [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](#).

- Leaders in the **U.S. Congress** recently released the [text of appropriations legislation](#) they intend to advance this week. The funding package contains several provisions to address key health care extenders and other priorities, including: delays in Medicaid payments cuts to disproportionate share hospitals (DSH) and extensions for community health centers, national health service corps, and teaching health centers that operate graduate medical education (GME) programs; temporary payment increase under the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule and an extension of increased inpatient hospital payment adjustment for certain hospitals; and behavioral health provisions such as requiring state Medicaid plans to cover medication-assisted treatment, creating a permanent state Medicaid option allowing substance user disorder treatment at institutions, monitoring the prescribing of anti-psychotic medications, and providing guidance related to improving the behavioral health workforce. The legislation does not contain site-neutral, price transparency, or 340B provisions of the Lower Costs More Transparency Act, nor does it reauthorize the SUPPORT Act or the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act. VHHA remains engaged in communication with congressional leaders regarding funding priorities for hospitals and health systems.
- 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 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 **U.S. Food and Drug Administration** (FDA) has granted emergency use authorization (EUA) for the first over-the-counter home antigen test to detect flu and COVID-19. The SEKISUI Diagnostics LLC OSOM Flu SARS-CoV-2 Combo Home Test is authorized for use to detect and differentiate influenza A and B and SARS-CoV-2 in nasal swab specimens from people aged 14 and older when conducted at least twice over three days with at least 48 hours between tests. The test is authorized for people ages 14 or older with self-collected anterior (nares) nasal swab specimens and those aged two years or older when an adult collects the nasal swab specimens. The OSOM Flu SARS-CoV-2 Combo Home Test is the first over the counter at-home antigen test that detects both flu and COVID-19 viruses to receive an EUA.
- The **Federal Trade Commission** (FTC) and the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** (HHS) are soliciting public comment under a request for information pertaining to market concentration among large health care group purchasing organizations (GPO) and drug wholesalers, as well as information about contracting practices. The purpose of the request is to provide the federal agencies with an understanding of how the practices of two pharmaceutical drug middlemen groups – GPOs and drug wholesalers – may contribute to generic drug shortages. Comments may be submitted 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. Virginia General Assembly Leaders Announce Budget Deal, Signaling End of 2024 Legislation Session

With just days to spare, a pair of **Virginia General Assembly** leaders this week announced that a state budget deal has been brokered, putting lawmakers on pace to complete their work and conclude the 2024 regular legislative session by the previously scheduled target adjournment date of Saturday, March 9. It is the first time in several years that work on the state budget has been completed on time. The announcement of a budget deal came in the form of a joint statement issued Thursday (March 7) by **Senator Louise Lucas** of Portsmouth, Chair of the **Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee**, and **Delegate Luke Torian** of Prince William County, Chair of the **House Appropriations Committee**. The brief statement doesn’t provide many specific details. It references funding for “education, health and human resources, public safety, and in protecting Virginia’s environment” and mentions pay raises for teachers and state and local government employees, as well as “additional investments in health and human resources to address behavioral health and in public safety to make communities safer through funding for violence prevention and supports for victims of crime.” Amendments to the compromise budget bill can be viewed online [here](#). VHHA will provide additional details about health-related budget provisions after they become available. The budget pending approval by the legislature reflects an amended version of the fiscal blueprint proposed by **Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin** in December 2023 to govern state spending during a two-year period beginning July 1, 2024. Once approved by the legislature, the budget will be sent to Governor Youngkin for his review, at which point he has the ability to amend elements of the budget bill. He can also reject budget provisions with a line-item veto. The budget does not include a package of financial support for a proposed professional sports arena complex in Alexandria, a key priority for the Governor. That omission is a complicating factor which portends uncertainty about how the Governor may deal with the budget legislation that is sent to him. Legislators are scheduled to return to Richmond in April to consider and act upon any changes the Governor makes to the budget. Throughout this process, the **VHHA Government Relations Team** will continue its vigorous engagement with the Youngkin Administration to advocate for budgetary action that supports Virginia hospitals, health systems, and community health in the Commonwealth. – Julie Dime

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

Registration is open for the **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. – Sharon Alexander

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

[Registration is now open](#) for the **2024 Virginia Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Summit**, which is scheduled for April 24 at The Westin – Richmond. 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. Visit this [link](#) for more information and contact Isaac Rife at irife@vhha.com to learn about sponsorship opportunities.

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5. VHHA, Partners Launch Five-Part Monthly Webinar Series on Maternal and Infant Health Data

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 week. Visit this [link](#) to register and read more [here](#).

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6. VHHA *Patients Come First* Podcast Features Physician Leader from VCU Pauley Heart Center

The latest episode of VHHA’s *Patients Come First* podcast features **Dr. Greg Hundley**, a cardiologist and Director of the **Pauley Heart Center at VCU Health**. He joins us for a conversation about his career and clinical work, medical imaging, heart health, training future generations of cardiac sonographers, his podcast, 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. VDH Provides Details on Nurse Preceptor Incentive Program Funding

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 or (804) 864-7431.

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8. VHHA Solutions Partner CommerceHealthcare Shares 2024 Report on Health Finance Trends

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](#).

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9. CDC Updates Guidance Regarding Respiratory Virus Safety, Relaxes Isolation Recommendations

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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10. Around the State

Nancy Howell Agee, CEO of **Carilion Clinic**; **Dr. J. Stephen Jones**, President and CEO of **Inova Health System**; **Dr. K. Craig Kent**, CEO of **UVA Health**; and **Dennis Matheis**, President and CEO of **Sentara Health**; have been named to The Power 50 list for 2024 by *Virginia Business*. Read more [here](#).

Cindy Elkins has been selected to serve as the next Administrator and Assistant Vice President for **Lee County Community Hospital** and **Lonesome Pine Hospital** in the **Ballad Health** system. Most recently,

Elkins served as the multi-facility director of pharmacy for **Ballad Health** Cancer Care in Norton, **Dickenson Community Hospital**, Lee County Community Hospital, Lonesome Pine Hospital, and **Norton Community Hospital**. She earned a bachelor's degree from the VCU School of Pharmacy and holds board certification as a pharmacotherapy specialist. Read more [here](#).

Dr. Alice Tang has been named Chief Medical Officer for **Reston Hospital Center**. She joins HCA Virginia from **Sentara Northern Virginia Medical Center**, where she served as Chief Medical Officer. Tang earned a bachelor's degree from Johns Hopkins University, an MPH in Maternal and Child Health from Boston University, and a DO from Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine. She completed her emergency medicine residency and her fellowship in emergency ultrasound at the University of Maryland Medical System. She also completed her MBA from George Washington University.

Carl Cline, Vice President and Administrator of **Carilion Franklin Community Hospital**; **William Flattery**, CEO of **Carilion New River Valley Medical Center** and Vice President of **Carilion Clinic Western Region**; **Greg Madsen**, CEO of **Carilion Rockbridge Community Hospital** and Vice President of **Carilion Clinic Eastern Division**; and **Kristie Williams**, CEO and Vice President of **Carilion Giles Community Hospital** and **Carilion Tazewell Community Hospital**; have been named to the *Becker's Hospital Review* 2024 110 rural hospital and health system CEOs to know [list](#).

Terri Feely, Chief People Officer for **Inova Health System**; **Mel Goodrich**, Senior Vice President and Chief People Officer for **Sentara Health**; and **Becky Sawyer**, Executive Vice President and Chief People Officer for **Sentara Health**; have been named to the *Becker's Hospital Review* 2024 84 CHROs and chief people officers to know [list](#). – Salinna Lor

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