

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

Articles:

1. [VHHA in Action](#)
2. [VHHA Hosts Virginia Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Summit on 'Human Caused Incidents'](#)
3. [Federal Rules to Impact Hospital Ability to Provide EMS Agencies with Drug Exchange Replacement](#)
4. [Administrative Dispute Resolution Process for 340B Established in Federal Rule](#)
5. [Register for the 2024 Virginia Behavioral Health Summit, May 16 in Richmond](#)
6. [VHHA Patients Come First Podcast Features Wythe County Community Hospital Nursing Leader](#)
7. [CMS Issues Final Rules on Medicaid Payments, Nursing Home Staffing](#)
8. [VHHA to Host May 29 In-Person Workshop on Identifying and Retaining Devoted Employees](#)
9. [Hospitals Encouraged to Participate in CDC Maternity Practices in Infant Care, Nutrition Survey](#)
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 **Federal Trade Commission (FTC)**, the **U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)**, and the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)** recently launched a website – HealthyCompetition.gov – to serve as an online portal for the public to report potentially unfair and anti-competitive health care practices. The FTC and the DOJ Antitrust Division plan to review complaints for the appropriate agency to investigate if sufficient concern is raised under antitrust laws or HHS authorities.
- The **Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)**, the **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)**, Europol's **European Cybercrime Centre (EC3)**, and the Netherlands' **National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC-NL)** recently issued a joint Cybersecurity Advisory (CSA), to share known [Akira ransomware](#) tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) and indicators of compromise (IOC) identified through FBI investigations as recently as February 2024. Read more [here](#).
- This week, the FTC issued a [final rule](#) that would ban non-compete contracts which prohibit workers from pursuing some other employment opportunities when an employer contract concludes. The final rule does not apply to existing agreements with executives in policy making positions who earn more than \$151,164 annually. While the FTC recognized it does not have jurisdiction over not-for-profit entities, it reserved the right to evaluate an entity's non-profit status and indicated some non-profits may be within FTC jurisdiction, including "some portion of the 58 percent of hospitals that claim tax-exempt status as non-profits." The rule is slated to take effect 120 days after publication in the Federal Register. Litigation challenging the FTC rule has been filed by the **U.S. Chamber of Commerce** and the **Business Roundtable**.

- The **HHS Office for Civil Rights** recently issued a [final rule](#) that prohibits entities regulated by the HIPAA Privacy Rule from using or disclosing protected health information to investigate or prosecute patients, providers, or others involved in providing legal reproductive health services. The rule requires covered entities to obtain a signed attestation that certain requests for personal health information potentially related to reproductive health care are not for these prohibited purposes. The rule will take effect 60 days after publication in the Federal Register and require covered entities to comply within 240 days.
- This week, VHHA participated in the “State of Bio” event held at **Sentara Northern Virginia Medical Center**. This free event was hosted by the **Northern Virginia BioHub** with support from the following sponsors: the **Virginia Coordinated Clinical Research Network (VCCRN)**, **Sentara Health**, the **George Mason University Institute for Biohealth Innovation**, and the **Prince William County Department of Economic Development**. The event included a panel discussion highlighting innovation needs in health care, new discoveries advancing science and medicine, and the importance of research and health care partnerships. Participants also had networking opportunities with health care professionals, life science industry partners, and academic researchers.
- The **Virginia Department of Health (VDH)** and **State Health Commissioner Dr. Karen Shelton** recently provided an update on an increase in meningococcal disease activity as part of the response to the ongoing [statewide outbreak](#) caused by *Neisseria meningitidis* serogroup Y. VDH reports that cases from a separate strain of ciprofloxacin and penicillin-resistant *N. meningitidis* serogroup Y continue to be detected in Northern Virginia, impacting local post-exposure prophylaxis recommendations in this region. Meningococcal disease is a rare, but serious illness caused by the bacterium *Neisseria meningitidis*. The two most common types of meningococcal infections are infections of the lining of the brain and spinal cord (called meningitis), and bloodstream infections (septicemia). Both infection types are very serious and can be deadly in a matter of hours. Health care providers are advised to remain vigilant regarding the possibility of additional cases. Read more [here](#).
- In a new [public service announcement](#), Virginia nurses from hospitals across the Commonwealth urge people to behave respectfully during visits to health care facilities so clinicians can stay focused on providing patient care. That message is at the heart of the ongoing “Help Us, Help You” public awareness and education campaign from VHHA, which draws attention to the heightened risk of workplace violence faced by health care professionals. Workplace violence is a serious challenge in health care settings. The latest videos feature hospital nurses explaining why directing verbal abuse towards clinical staff doing their jobs is inappropriate because it can cause distractions that impede their ability to care for patients. The same is true of physically assaulting or threatening to harm clinical staff providing care. Such conduct is illegal in Virginia and may carry serious criminal penalties. Nurses featured in the videos offer advice on proper conduct in health care settings – telling viewers not to bring weapons into a hospital and to refrain from verbal outbursts and improper physical contact with staff in clinical environments – and share strategies for patients and visitors to appropriately address concerns by asking questions and sharing feedback in a respectful manner. A [30-second version](#) of the new public service announcement has been shared with television and radio stations across the state and will be promoted on digital channels. This current effort follows a previous public awareness campaign on this subject featuring a series of videos VHHA released in [June 2023](#) highlighting the raw, emotional stories of hospital nurses from [Central Virginia](#), [Northern Virginia](#), and [Southwest Virginia](#) about their firsthand experience with workplace violence in clinical settings. Read more [here](#).

- VHHA recently elected the 2024-2025 slate of officers to its **Board of Directors** during its annual Spring Meeting. The Board, comprised of hospital and health system leaders from across the Commonwealth, unanimously elected **VCU Health** Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer **Michael Elliott** as Chair, **Valley Health System** President and CEO **Mark Nantz** as Vice Chair, and **HCA Healthcare Capital Division** President **Dr. William Lunn** as Secretary-Treasurer. Elliott is the first African American Board Chair for the Association. Other Board of Directors officers include **Ballad Health** Chief Operating Officer and Executive Vice President **Eric Deaton** as the Immediate Past Chair, and VHHA President and CEO **Sean T. Connaughton**. VHHA Board officers are elected to 12-month terms. In addition to the Board officers, VHHA's Executive Committee includes **Riverside Health System** CEO **Dr. Mike Dacey**, **Sentara Leigh Hospital** President **Joanne Inman**, and **Mary Washington Healthcare** President and CEO **Dr. Mike McDermott**. Read more [here](#).
- Virginia health care professionals looking to gain quality and patient safety improvement knowledge are invited to engage with the **VHHA Center for Healthcare Excellence** to access **IHI Open School** courses and earn a certificate in quality and safety. The IHI Open School offers access to online courses created by world-renowned faculty in improvement capability, patient safety, triple aim for populations, person- and family-centered care, and leadership. Health care professionals who may find this opportunity beneficial include physicians, nurses, allied health professionals, hospital managers, quality, safety, risk management, patient experience and population health staff, and leaders in a Virginia hospital. Join us and collaborate across professions and health systems to improve how health professionals in Virginia work together to deliver better care. The program registration fee is \$199. Please send any questions to Kristie Burnette at kburnette@vhha.com.
- The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC) has [interim guidance](#) for clinicians on recommendations for preventing exposure to highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) A(H5N1) viruses, including infection prevention and control measures, testing, antiviral treatment, patient investigations, and monitoring of exposed persons. The guidance has been updated recently in the wake a positive test for bird flu documented in the U.S.
- Through May 28, the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** (HHS) Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology is seeking comment on a [federal strategic plan](#) for health information technology over the next five years. The plan outlines federal goals and strategies to support electronic health information access, exchange, and use. Federal agencies will use the final plan to prioritize and coordinate their efforts and signal priorities to the private sector.
- The **Advanced Research Projects Agency** (ARPA-H) of the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** (HHS) has issued a [draft solicitation](#) seeking applicants to the Health Care Rewards to Achieve Improved Outcomes (HEROES) program that will evaluate a new payment model to incentivize community-based interventions to improve health outcomes in a geographic area. Under the current timeline, abstracts from interested applicants are due by June 17. The model will offer participating non-profit organizations, consortiums, and others direct payments to reduce specific health harms in an area. Questions may be sent to heroes@arpa-h.gov.
- Through May 20, appropriate state agencies can apply for up to \$2 million per year to partner with communities to integrate primary and behavioral health care in clinical practices and up to \$900,000 annually to implement a primary care model that integrates mental health and substance use conditions. These funding opportunities are available through the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration** (SAMHSA). Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

Another grant opportunity open to local governments and mental health systems is offering as much as \$750,000 annually to implement assisted outpatient treatment programs to support adults with serious mental illness. The application deadline for that program is today (Friday, April 26). Read more [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 the [Staunton News Leader](#), [WHSV](#), [WTVR](#), [WDBJ](#), [Yahoo News](#), [WFXR](#), [WTKR](#), and [DC News Now](#).

[Back](#)

2. VHHA Hosts Virginia Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Summit on ‘Human Caused Incidents’

This week, VHHA hosted the **2024 Virginia Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Summit** as an in-person event in Richmond. The theme for this year’s Summit was “Human Caused Incidents” and the program featured speakers, panelists, sponsors, and support organizations focused on how the Virginia health care community can strengthen its preparedness for such situations. Summit participants were eligible for 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 were also offered to qualified participants. VHHA extends its thanks to the following generous sponsors whose support helped keep ticket price lows to promote access and inclusion: [Qualivis](#), [Vizient](#), [Centra Health](#), [Ethos Preparedness](#), [Mary Washington Healthcare](#), [Motorola Solutions](#), [Sentara Health](#), [Valley Health](#), [VCU Health](#), [VHHA Solutions](#), [AramSCO](#), [Jensen Hughes](#), and [Pulsara](#). Read more [here](#) and view event photos through this [link](#). – Robert Hawkins and Matt Allen

[Back](#)

3. Federal Rules to Impact Hospital Ability to Provide EMS Agencies with Drug Exchange Replacement

Several pending regulatory changes from the **U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** and the **Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA)** will impact the ability of VHHA member hospitals to continue providing emergency medical service (EMS) agencies with pre-filled drug exchange systems and helping to replenish used or expired drugs contained in drug kits. Historically, VHHA members have supported EMS agencies by ensuring that they have a consistent supply of medications to treat patients in a pre-hospital environment. In anticipation of forthcoming federal rules, VHHA has collaborated with the **Virginia Society of Health-System Pharmacists (VSHSP)** and participated in the Virginia Regional EMS Medication Kit Transition Workgroup to ensure a safe transition to the new regulatory environment. Subsequently, VHHA and VSHSP have issued a joint statement notifying stakeholders and impacted organizations that the pending DEA and FDA regulations will require the discontinuation of hospital and health system provided pre-filled drug kit exchanges and single drug replenishment as of Nov. 27, 2024. After that date, single drug replenishment may be limited due to the new regulations. Questions may be directed to Brent Rawlings at brawlings@vhha.com. – Brent Rawlings

[Back](#)

4. Administrative Dispute Resolution Process for 340B Established in Federal Rule

The **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)** recently issued a [final rule](#) that establishes a 340B Administrative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process as is required under the Affordable Care Act. The rule establishes an ADR process allowing 340B covered entities, regardless of organization size or claim

monetary value, to address claims in dispute with drug companies. The process allows covered entities to bring forth claims of being overcharged by a drug company, including where the drug company or its wholesaler denies access to 340B pricing; allows claims for ADR panel review even if the particular issue at stake is subject to concurrent federal court review; requires decisions be reached by the ADR process within one year of submission for ADR review; and includes a reconsideration process for parties dissatisfied with the 340B ADR panel decision.

[Back](#)

5. Register for the 2024 Virginia Behavioral Health Summit, May 16 in Richmond

Register for the **2024 Virginia Behavioral Health Summit** scheduled for May 16 in Richmond. The theme of the one-day event is “Connection: Building a Behavioral Health System that Serves All” and its purpose is to expand knowledge about behavioral health treatment and access for clinicians, healthcare administrators, policymakers, and community-based providers. The Summit will feature innovative behavioral health models, patient-centered strategies, an overview of the expansion of the crisis system across the state, and the opportunity to learn about advances in technology that can improve behavioral health resources. Visit this [link](#) to register and reserve lodging accommodations. View the Summit agenda [here](#).

[Back](#)

6. VHHA *Patients Come First* Podcast Features Wythe County Community Hospital Nursing Leader

The latest episode of VHHA’s *Patients Come First* podcast features an interview with **Theresa Dix**, Chief Nursing Officer at **Wythe County Community Hospital**, a **Lifepoint Health** facility. She joins us for a conversation about her career, Wythe County Community Hospital’s National Quality Leader Designation, workforce development, 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, 105.1 FM and 1050 AM in Lynchburg, and Wednesdays at 1 p.m. on 93.9 FM in Richmond. Send questions, comments, feedback, or guest suggestions to pcfpodcast@vhha.com. – Julian Walker

[Back](#)

7. CMS Issues Final Rules on Medicaid Payments, Nursing Home Staffing

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** (CMS) recently issued final rules focused on [Medicaid fee-for-service](#) and [managed care programs](#), and on [minimum staffing requirements for Medicare and Medicaid participating nursing homes](#). The Medicaid payment rules align requirements in the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) with the Medicaid program and finalize several changes to state directed payments, including codifying state flexibility for directed payments to match the average commercial rate. The final rule on nursing home staffing standards will require nursing homes to provide a minimum of 3.48 hours of nursing care per resident day, including 0.55 hours of care from a registered nurse per resident day and at least 2.45 hours of care from a nurse aide per resident day, as well as 24/7

onsite RN services. CMS slightly expanded the opportunity for facilities to seek exemptions from the requirements from its original proposal.

[Back](#)

8. VHHA to Host May 29 In-Person Workshop on Identifying and Retaining Devoted Employees

VHHA is hosting an in-person workshop on May 29 (10 a.m.-2 p.m.) at its offices in Glen Allen, VA that will be facilitated by **Joe Mull**, a featured keynote speaker at the [2024 Virginia Healthcare Workforce Summit](#). The theme of the workshop is “Becoming a Destination Workplace: What Leaders Must Do to Find and Keep Devoted Employees.” Registration cost is \$50, which includes lunch and all meeting materials. Capacity is limited for this event. Register [here](#) to secure a spot. Questions may be directed to events@vhha.com. – Sharon Alexander

[Back](#)

9. Hospitals Encouraged to Participate in CDC Maternity Practices in Infant Care, Nutrition Survey

Survey responses are being collected for the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** [Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care \(mPINC\)](#) 2024 survey. Every two years, CDC invites all U.S. hospitals with maternity services to participate in the survey. Battelle, the organization conducting the 2024 mPINC survey on behalf of the CDC, continues to reach out to hospital points of contact by phone to confirm that the hospital is eligible to participate. This is an important step in the process as no link to the survey will be sent until Battelle has spoken with a hospital contact. In 2022, 55 percent of hospitals in Virginia that were eligible to respond participated in the mPINC survey. Participating in mPINC can help highlight key areas where facilities are performing well and opportunities for potential improvement in infant nutrition and care. Subscribe to the CDC mPINC listerv by sending a message to mPINC@cdc.gov that includes the sender’s name and e-mail address. Learn more about how CDC administers the mPINC survey [here](#). – Mary Brandenburg

[Back](#)

10. Around the State

Howard P. Kern, former President and CEO Emeritus of **Sentara Health**, has been appointed as a Distinguished Professor of Executive Practice for the future Joint School of Public Health at Old Dominion University. Read more [here](#).

Dr. Genevieve “Jen” Lankowicz, MD, Chief Medical Officer for **Chesapeake Regional Healthcare**; **Dr. Christopher Newman**, MD, Executive Vice President, Chief Operating Officer, and Chief Medical Officer at **Mary Washington Healthcare**; **Dr. Rawle “Tony” Seupaul**, MD, Executive Vice President and Chief Physician Executive at **Carilion Clinic**; **Dr. Amit Vashist**, MD, Senior Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer at **Ballad Health**; and **Dr. David Wessel**, MD, Executive Vice President, Chief Medical Officer, and Physician-in-Chief at **Children’s National Hospital**, have been named to the 2024 *Becker’s Hospital Review* 180 Chief Medical Officers to know [list](#).

Ballad Health has named **Shane Hilton** as its new Chief Financial Officer. Hilton earned a bachelor’s degree in accounting and business economics from Milligan University and a master’s degree in business administration from King University. Read more [here](#).

Ballad Health has selected **Dr. Paula Masters** to serve as its first Chief Health Disparities Officer. Before joining Ballad Health, Masters served as assistant dean of student services at East Tennessee State University's College of Public Health. Masters holds a doctorate degree in community and behavioral health and a master's degree in healthcare management and policy. Read more [here](#).

Linda Talley, MS, RN, NE-BC, FAAN, Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer for **Children's National Hospital** has been recognized by the American Organization for Nursing Leadership with the Exemplary Leadership Award.

Christopher Finley; AVP of Community Engagement for **HCA Healthcare Capital Division**; **Matthew Marry**, CEO of **VHHA Solutions**; **Shannon Murphy**, Chief of Staff at **Sentara Health**; and **Brenda Woodcock**, President of **Bon Secours Southside Medical Center** and **Southern Virginia Medical Center**; are among 45 high-performing individuals selected to the [Lead Virginia Class of 2024](#).

The **VHHA Communications Team** won two first place awards and one second place award in the **Virginia Professional Communicators 2024** statewide communications award content. VHHA received first place awards for a [video about health care workplace violence](#) and an [episode of the Patients Come First podcast](#). The second place award was received for the [Control Your Care](#) health care consumer education campaign. – Salinna Lor

[Back](#)
