

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:

- This week, the **Virginia Healthcare Emergency Management Program (VHEMP)** – a partnership between the **Virginia Department of Health (VDH)**, VHHA, and the four regional healthcare coalitions – hosted an hourlong webinar focused on medical facility operational planning in the lead up to the 2024 election cycle and the role of medical intelligence in anticipating potential issues. Recent years have seen an increase in civil unrest events across the nation, which can unfortunately impact health care operations in several ways including the potential for mass casualty events. This year's elections have the potential to spark protests or other conduct that could have public health implications. The webinar featured **Scott Cormier**, Vice President of Emergency Management and Safety with **Medxcel**. View a webinar recording [here](#) and presentation slides through this [link](#).
- The **Executive Committee** of the **VHHA Board of Directors** met this week for a discussion of issues of interest and importance to hospitals and health systems.
- This week, VHHA convened a series of calls with hospital chief medical officers, chief nursing officers, and pharmacy leaders regarding the reduced shipment allocation of IV fluid solution and peritoneal dialysis solution due to flooding and rain damage caused by Hurricane Helene at the **Baxter International Inc.** facility in Marion, NC. During the call, members discussed conservation strategies and other response strategies being pursued during this time. VHHA is working with member hospitals and state and federal partners in response to this evolving situation.

- VHHA released a [new video](#) this week that provides a recap of the recent flu shot awareness and promotional event held in collaboration with the **Virginia Department of Health (VDH)** and **Bon Secours**. The video features **Richmond Mayor Levar Stoney**, **Virginia State Health Commissioner Dr. Karen Shelton**, **Bon Secours – Richmond Market President Mike Lutes**, VHHA President and CEO **Sean T. Connaughton**, **Virginia State Senator Lamont Bagby**, **Virginia Delegate Rae Cousins**, and **Richmond City Councilmember Cynthia Newbille**. Read more about the event [here](#), view photos through this [link](#), and watch the livestream recording of the event [here](#).
- The **U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** recently [granted](#) marketing authorization for the Healgen Rapid Check COVID-19/Flu A&B Antigen Test. The test, which is authorized for use without a prescription, is for use by individuals experiencing respiratory symptoms. It uses a nasal swab sample to deliver at-home results in approximately 15 minutes for COVID-19 and influenza (flu). The test detects proteins from both SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) and influenza A and B (the viruses that cause flu). This is the first over-the-counter test that can detect influenza to be granted marketing authorization using a traditional pre-market review pathway, which enables the test to be marketed in the absence of an applicable emergency use declaration. Other similar tests are currently available under emergency use authorization.
- The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)** recently issued an interim final rule regarding the fiscal year (FY) 2025 hospital inpatient prospective payment system (PPS) low wage index policy. The proposal calls for discontinuing the low wage index policy. Public comments on the rule are being accepted until Nov. 29. Read more [here](#).
- The **Virginia Neonatal Perinatal Collaborative (VNPC)** is slated to host its 2024 Annual Summit – “Connecting the Dots: Action to Outcome” – Oct. 20-21 at the Wintergreen Resort. The VNPC Annual Summit offers an opportunity to hear important updates on statewide quality improvement initiatives, learn about new findings in the world of maternal and infant health, and connect with others in the field. Experts will speak on topics relevant to maternal and infant health in Virginia with an emphasis on evidence-based actions and how to continue Virginia’s progress toward improving outcomes. Hospital quality, obstetric, pediatric, nursing, health equity, and population health leaders are encouraged to attend. Learn more and register [here](#).
- **HosPAC**, the political action committee of VHHA, is in the midst of its 2024 fundraising campaign and needs support from members of the health care community. Financial contributions of any amount, large or small, help HosPAC support candidates for state office who are committed to strengthening the health care delivery system in Virginia by growing the health care workforce, promoting access to care, and investing in public health. By supporting candidates from both parties who champion these values, HosPAC helps advance the voice of the health care community in state public policy development. Please consider contributing to HosPAC to support this important work on behalf of Virginia hospitals, health systems, and their teams. Visit this [link](#) to make contributions and contact Hannah Coley at hcoley@vhha.com with any questions.
- 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 [VPM](#), [SWVA Today](#), the [Winchester Star](#), the [Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star](#), multiple [articles](#) from [WAVY](#), multiple [articles](#) from [WVEC](#), [Yahoo News](#), [Middle Neck News](#), [WHRO](#), [WTOP](#), [WWBT](#), [WRIC](#), the [Hampton Roads Messenger](#), and the [Independent](#).

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2. Today is the Deadline to Book Lodging for the 2024 VHHA Hospital and Healthcare Leaders Summit

Today (Friday, Oct. 11) is the deadline to book lodging at the Omni Homestead Resort for the **2024 Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Leaders Summit**, scheduled for Nov. 6-8 in Hot Springs, VA. Conference registration remains open, but hotel accommodations need to be booked by today. The theme for this annual VHHA event is “Come Home to Healthcare.” The Summit programming agenda is centered around topics of interest and opportunities for networking and engagement with fellow leaders and national experts. Former **U.S. Representative Harold Ford Jr.** of Tennessee is confirmed as a Summit keynote speaker. Summit participants are also eligible for continuing education credits. Visit this [link](#) to register and contact events@vhha.com for questions or registration assistance.

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3. DMAS Seeking Survey Responses on Dispensing Prescriptions to Medicaid Members

The **Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS)** has contracted with Myers and Stauffer LLC to conduct the required five-year survey for the cost of dispensing prescriptions to Virginia Medicaid fee-for-service members. Meyers and Stauffer mailed and e-mailed the survey to pharmacy contacts on Sept. 12. The survey should have been mailed to hospital primary addresses and e-mails have been sent to those registered in the DMAS pharmacy system through Gainwell. The survey is due back to Meyers and Stauffer by Oct. 17. Those who need the survey but haven’t received it are encouraged to visit this [link](#) to access it and related documents. Survey questions can be directed to Myers and Stauffer at (800) 374-6858 or disp_survey@mslc.com. DMAS Pharmacy Systems Administrator Kiara Jasper can be contacted at (804) 762-3112 or kiara.jasper@dmass.virginia.gov with additional questions.

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4. Virginia Hospitals Contend with Baxter Plant Closure, Resulting IV Solution Shortages

Last week, the **Baxter International Inc.** North Cove facility in Marion, NC was impacted by heavy rain and flooding associated with Hurricane Helene. Storm and flood damage has resulted in the [closure of the manufacturing plant](#) that primarily manufactures intravenous and [peritoneal dialysis solutions](#). Baxter is a major U.S. manufacturer of these products and reportedly produces 1.5 million units of IV solution daily, accounting for approximately 60 percent of the domestic United States production. As a result of the North Cove plant closure, Baxter has announced reduced supply allocations for its clients based on ordering history from March-August 2024. Initial allocation amounts range from 40-50 percent for some of the more common IV solution products. An [update](#) Baxter provided this week revised those amounts from 40 percent to 60 percent allocation levels for the highest demand IV fluids for direct customers and from 10 percent to 60 percent for distributors effective Oct. 9. The firm said it is also increasing high concentration dextrose and sterile water for injection allocations and expects to make additional increases for certain product codes by early November. Allocations for IV solutions and nutrition products for designated children’s hospitals were increased to 100 percent. These amounts mean that for the time being some health care providers will receive fewer IV products from Baxter than they are traditionally accustomed to receiving in orders placed based on consumption of these resources. In response, health care facilities and providers are assessing existing IV solution product inventory, monitoring usage rates, and exploring a range of conservation strategies to preserve supplies in the current environment. VHHA is actively monitoring the situation and working with members, as

well as state and federal partners, in support of hospitals and health systems. Additional guidance has been provided by the [American Hospital Association \(AHA\)](#), [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\) Secretary Xavier Becerra](#), [Virginia State Health Commissioner Dr. Karen Shelton](#), [ECRI](#), and the [U.S. Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#). As of Oct. 11, Baxter has indicated it is establishing a dedicated e-mail address through which consumers such as hospitals can contact the company with IV-related questions: hurricanehelenesupport@baxter.com.

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5. Health Care Professionals Can Apply for Sorensen Institute Political Leaders Program by Nov. 12

The **Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership** at the **University of Virginia** has opened the application period for the 2025 Political Leader Program; the application window will close on Nov. 12. The 2025 cohort program will run from March-December. Visit this [link](#) for more information and to access the program application. The previous class featured several VHHA-affiliated individuals – in 2020, VHHA [entered into a five-year partnership with Sorensen](#) to support its programming and help identify health care leaders who are strong candidates for the Political Leaders Program. Program participants are drawn from a diverse group of applicants from across the state, and will focus on Virginia politics and governing, policy issues and solutions, regional needs, ethical servant leadership, and efforts to unite the Commonwealth. This program is primarily focused on individuals who are 10-plus years removed from college. Prospective program applicants from VHHA hospitals or health systems are encouraged to contact VHHA President and CEO **Sean T. Connaughton** at sconnaughton@vhha.com to discuss this opportunity and the ways in which VHHA can support applicants.

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6. VHHA *Patients Come First* Podcast Features VCU Health Liver Transplant Surgeon

The latest episode of VHHA's *Patients Come First* podcast features **Dr. Seung Lee**, a transplant surgeon who is the Associate Surgical Director of Liver Transplant and Living Liver Donor at the **VCU Health Hume-Lee Transplant Center**, for a conversation about his work, liver health and transplants, 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](#), [Stitcher](#), [Tuneln](#), [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 Sunday at noon 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.

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7. Donate to Support Hospitals, Providers Impacted by Hurricane Helene

Donations are now being accepted to support hospitals operated by VHHA members **Ballad Health** and **Lifepoint Health**, and staff members at those facilities, impacted by the heavy rain, winds, and flooding caused by Hurricane Helene in parts of Southwest Virginia, Western North Carolina, and Eastern Tennessee. Contributions to support recovery efforts can be made to the Ballad Health Team Member Emergency Fund that will benefit team members affected by the disaster, the Patient Assistance Fund to benefit patients who have financial needs, and the Disaster Relief Fund. Visit this [link](#) to make an online

donation or text “disasterrelief” to 44834 to make a gift. Meanwhile, the Lifecare Fund serves to provide short-term, emergency support to Lifepoint Health employees or eligible dependents who are facing serious financial hardship as a result of certain unforeseen and unpreventable circumstances and who cannot afford housing, utilities, or basic living expenses. Donate to the fund through this [link](#). In addition to those resources, the **North Carolina Hospital Association** (NCHA) and the **Tennessee Hospital Association** (THA) are also accepting donations for disaster relief funds. NCHA contributions can be made [here](#). THA is accepting donations through Venmo: @THA_Hospital_Employee_Relief.

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8. CDC Monitoring Bird Flu Cases in U.S., Issues Health Advisory on Marburg Virus Outbreak in Africa

The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC) recently [confirmed](#) two human cases of H5 bird flu in California involving people with occupational exposure to infected dairy cows. An investigation led by California is ongoing. The identification of H5 in people with exposure to infected animals is not unexpected and does not change the CDC risk assessment for the general public, which continues to be low. In other news, the CDC recently [issued](#) a Health Alert Network (HAN) Health Advisory to inform clinicians about the Republic of Rwanda’s first confirmed outbreak of Marburg virus disease (MVD) with 36 laboratory confirmed cases and 11 deaths reported as of Oct. 2, including at least 19 cases in health care workers. MVD is a rare but highly fatal viral hemorrhagic fever (VHF) caused by infection with one of two zoonotic viruses, Marburg virus or Ravn virus. Marburg virus and Ravn virus are in the virus family *Filoviridae*, which also includes Ebola viruses. A person infected with the Marburg virus is not contagious before the appearance of symptoms, which may include fever, headache, muscle and joint pain, fatigue, loss of appetite, gastrointestinal symptoms, or unexplained bleeding. MVD is spread through direct contact with broken skin or mucous membranes with the body fluids of someone who is sick with MVD, or who recently died from their infection. It is not spread by airborne transmission. The **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** (HHS) has issued a [fact sheet](#) on MVD and **Virginia State Health Commissioner Dr. Karen Shelton** has shared an [update](#) in a letter to clinicians.

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9. Join Oct. 23 Webinar on 2025 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule Presented by ChartSpan

[VHHA Solutions](#) and its endorsed partner, [ChartSpan](#), are presenting a webinar on Oct. 23 at noon on the topic of “Medicare Physician Fee Schedule 2025: Essential Updates for Virginia Practices.” The Medicare Physician Fee Schedule 2025 proposed rule brings major changes for practices: lower reimbursements, the removal of code G0511, and a brand-new program – Advanced Primary Care Management (APCM). APCM is available to all Medicare beneficiaries and could bring in new reimbursements for clinical practices. It also demands complex, in-depth care management. The webinar will cover the details of these proposed rule changes, how APCM will function in 2025, and provide a forum for participant questions. Read more about the webinar and register [here](#).

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10. Around the State

The **Centra Health Board of Directors** has appointed **Richard Tugman** as President and CEO of the health system. Tugman previously served in an interim period in the role. He is also a member of the **VHHA Board of Directors**. Read more [here](#).

Dr. John Moynihan, MD, FACS has been named President and Chief, Clinical Enterprise at **Inova**. Dr. Moynihan has been serving as Acting Chief, Clinical Enterprise, while maintaining his role as President of **Inova Surgical Services**. He is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Holy Cross College and Georgetown University School of Medicine. He completed a surgical residency at Georgetown and a peripheral vascular surgery fellowship at the University of Tennessee. Read more [here](#).

Dr. Fern R. Hauk, MD, FAAFP, Professor of Family Medicine at **UVA Health**, is the recipient of the 2024 American Academy of Family Physicians' Public Health Award for her work implementing an approach to caring for the growing population of refugees from Afghanistan in her community of Charlottesville, Virginia. Read more [here](#).

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