

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, VHHA staff attended a meeting of the legislative [Health Insurance Reform Commission](#) (HIRC). Topics covered during the meeting included a future review of the essential health benefits benchmark plan and other legislative measures pertaining to mandated benefits. View the meeting agenda and materials through this [link](#).
- **Riverside Health System** recently held a retirement celebration honoring **William B. "Bill" Downey**, the longtime CEO of the health system, for his many years of distinguished service and dedication to improving the health and well-being of communities. Bill Downey is a past chair of the VHHA Board of Directors who has made immense contributions to advancing health care in the Commonwealth. VHHA staff attended the ceremony, and we congratulate him on his well-earned retirement. View event photos [here](#).
- **Baxter International Inc.**, a medtech firm, has announced that flooding and associated storm damage from Hurricane Helene has caused the closure of its largest manufacturing facility, located in North Carolina, that primarily manufactures intravenous and peritoneal dialysis solutions (the firm is said to be the largest U.S. manufacturer of those solutions). Read more about the impact [here](#). In related news, **ECRI** issued guidance for addressing medical supply disruptions due to the hurricane. Access that information [here](#).
- 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@dmas.virginia.gov with additional questions.

- 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 [WWBT](#), the [Augusta Free Press](#), and [WVTF](#).

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2. Register for the 2024 VHHA Hospital and Healthcare Leaders Summit, Nov. 6-8

Now is the time to register for the **2024 Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Leaders Summit**, scheduled for Nov. 6-8 at The Omni Homestead Resort in Hot Springs, VA. 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. VHHA Honored with Prestigious Performance Excellence Award from SPQA

The **Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association (VHHA)** recently received the 2024 Achievement in Performance Excellence Award from the [U.S. Senate Productivity and Quality Award \(SPQA\) Program](#). The Performance Excellence Award signifies VHHA's continuing work and achievement in optimizing professional, organizational, and ethical practices in pursuit of its mission to support Virginia's hospitals and health systems in advancing the health and well-being of Virginians. VHHA's receipt of this award, which was formally presented during a September 20 ceremony, follows the Association earning the [SPQA Progress in Performance Excellence Award in 2020](#) as part of its multi-year process improvement efforts. The SPQA Achievement in Performance Excellence Award is an honor that recognizes organizations that take meaningful, active steps to build a culture that elevates performance and quality improvement, promotes innovation, and demonstrates measurable results. Receiving consideration for the award requires a significant organizational commitment to growth and process improvement as well as a rigorous, multi-step evaluation process by SPQA examiners who assess and analyze performance and offer observational feedback. The SPQA program is modeled on the [Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award](#). Under the leadership of its Board of Directors, VHHA began this process by deploying the Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework in 2017. The Association has continued those efforts by completing the SPQA Self-Assessment process in 2018, leading to the Progress in Performance Excellence Award in 2020, as well as the more recent Achievement in Performance Excellence Award. Read more [here](#).

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4. VDH, Bon Secours, VHHA Host Flu Shot Event with State Leaders

Millions of Americans contract the flu each year, which takes a physical toll on people and negatively impacts the economy. Yet only half of U.S. adults get an annual flu shot to protect against serious illness. This week, **Richmond Mayor Levar Stoney**, **Virginia State Health Commissioner Dr. Karen Shelton**, **Bon Secours – Richmond Market President Mike Lutes**, and VHHA President and CEO **Sean T. Connaughton** presided at an event at the **Bon Secours Sarah Garland Jones Center for Healthy Living** to promote the importance of flu shots. Several other officials including **Virginia State Senator Lamont Bagby**, **Virginia Delegate Rae Cousins**, **Richmond City Councilmember Cynthia Newbille**, and **Virginia Department of Health Professions Director Arne Owens** also attended the event. Read more [here](#), view event photos through this [link](#), and watch the livestream recording of the event [here](#).

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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 VHC Health Gastroenterologist

The latest episode of VHHA's *Patients Come First* podcast features **Dr. Saad Haque**, a physician with **VHC Health** who specializes in gastroenterology and hepatology. Our conversation covers how his pursuit of medical training brought him to the U.S., the importance of digestive and liver health, information about the **VHC Health Digestive Center**, 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](#), [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 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. Register for Oct. 9 Webinar on Healthcare Preparedness for 2024 Elections, Civil Unrest

The **Virginia Healthcare Emergency Management Program** (VHEMP) – a partnership between the **Virginia Department of Health** (VDH), VHHA, and the four regional healthcare coalitions – is hosting an hourlong webinar Oct. 9 at noon 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 will feature **Scott Cormier**, Vice President of Emergency Management and Safety with **Medxcel**. Register for the webinar [here](#).

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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

Steve Arner [officially took the helm](#) as CEO of **Carilion Clinic** this week (Oct. 1), succeeding longtime Carilion leader **Nancy Howell Agee**, who will serve as CEO Emeritus through September 2025. Arner is an accomplished health care leader and a member of the **VHHA Board of Directors**.

Dr. J. Stephen Jones, President and CEO of **Inova**, and **Robert Hisaoka**, Chair of **Inova Health Foundation**, have been named among the Top 50 Most Influential People in Northern Virginia by *Northern Virginia Magazine*. Read more [here](#).

Robert Broermann, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer for **Sentara Health**, has announced his plan to retire as of April 2025. He has served in this position since 2001. He earned a bachelor’s degree in accounting and a master’s degree in business administration from Old Dominion University.

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