

FYI Weekly

HEALTH CARE NEWS FOR VIRGINIA'S HOSPITALS AND HEALTH SYSTEMS

You are receiving this e-mail from VHHA because you requested a subscription. Questions and content submissions may be sent to jtwalker@vhha.com.

FEATURED CONTENT

[VHHA in Action](#)

[News Updates](#)

- [New Guidance on Hospital Reporting for Health Care Providers Who Seek Mental Health Care](#)
- [CDC Confirms Bird Flu Infection in California Pediatric Patient](#)
- [CMS Proposes Changes for 2026 Medicare Advantage, Prescription Drug Programs](#)
- [CMS, HHS Organ Transplant Final Rules Revealed, NIH Seeks Public Comment on Transplant Policies](#)

[Events](#)

- [Save the Date for the 2025 Virginia Patient Safety Summit](#)
- [Register for Dec. 4 Public Health Webinar for Virginia Hospital Teams](#)
- [Register for Dec. 18 Webinar on Winter Weather Preparedness Activities](#)

[Podcast](#)

- [VHHA Patients Come First Podcast Features VCU Health CMH Occupational Therapist](#)

[Around the State](#)

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 Foundation Website Updated with New Features, Content

- A redesign of the **VHHA Foundation** website has recently been completed. The revamped site features updated information about programmatic offerings, an events calendar, and much more. VHHA Foundation is the non-profit educational affiliate of VHHA. The Foundation hosts many of VHHA's conferences and educational programming and provides grant funding to support a variety of hospital-based programs and initiatives. Visit the site to learn more [here](#).

Register for VHHA Allied Health Care Summit on Dec. 5

- VHHA is hosting the **10th Annual Allied Health Care Summit** beginning at 2:30 p.m. on Dec. 5 at VHHA offices in Glen Allen, VA. The Summit brings together health care leaders and advocates for a conversation about priorities for the upcoming 2025 **Virginia General Assembly** session. An evening reception will be held following the afternoon Summit. **Virginia State Senator Ghazala Hashmi** will be a guest speaker during the event. Register to attend through this [link](#).

HosPAC 2024 Fundraising Campaign

- **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 in the News

- 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 [WTVR](#), [WINA](#), [WWWV](#), [QWER](#), and the [Northern Virginia Daily](#).

News Updates

New Guidance on Hospital Reporting for Health Care Providers Who Seek Mental Health Care

Pursuant to a state law change in 2024, the **Virginia Department of Health Professions** (DHP) has posted updated guidance materials pertaining to the reporting responsibilities of hospital chief executive officers and chiefs of staff in instances when health care providers seek mental health or substance use treatment services. Legislation enacted this year ([House Bill 42](#) and [Senate Bill 629](#)) clarifies reporting requirements when a health care professional is admitted for mental health treatment. Under the law, no report is required for a health care professional voluntarily admitted for treatment of substance abuse or psychiatric illness who is no longer believed to be a danger within 30 days. A report is still required within five days in cases of involuntary commitment for treatment of substance abuse or a psychiatric illness. The law also adds dentists and dental hygienists to the list of providers who are immune from civil liability for any act done or made in performance of duties while serving as a member of, or consultant to, a professional program to address issues related to career fatigue and wellness in health care professionals. The law also expands the availability of the program to dentists and dental hygienists and expands the types of services that can be provided to include outpatient treatment. See more information [here](#).

CDC Confirms Bird Flu Infection in California Pediatric Patient

The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC) recently confirmed that a child in California has been infected with avian influenza A(H5N1) (H5N1 bird flu). That is the first reported U.S. bird flu virus infection in a child. As with other previously identified U.S. human cases, the child reportedly experienced mild symptoms and received flu antivirals. The child is now recovering from the illness and an investigation by the **California Department of Public Health** (CDPH) into the possible H5N1 exposure source is ongoing. The CDC continues to monitor data from influenza surveillance systems, particularly in states including California that have been affected by outbreaks in animals – where outbreaks of H5N1 bird flu have been detected in wild birds and domestic poultry since 2022 and dairy herds since August 2024. Read more [here](#).

CMS Proposes Changes for 2026 Medicare Advantage, Prescription Drug Programs

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** (CMS) recently shared [proposed changes](#) to the Medicare Advantage (MA) and prescription drug programs for contract year 2026 that, among other things, would apply to coverage of anti-obesity medications in Medicare and Medicaid and reinforce standards to limit insurer use of internal criteria for MA plans to provide coverage for all reasonable and necessary Medicare Part A and B benefits. The agency also proposes updates to MA and Part D plan medical loss ratio reporting requirements. The proposed rule also seeks to codify provisions in the Inflation Reduction Act that cap some out-of-pocket costs in Medicare Part D, and other pharmacy-related provisions. Additional information can be found in this [CMS fact sheet](#).

CMS, HHS Organ Transplant Final Rules Revealed, NIH Seeks Public Comment on Transplant Policies

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** (CMS) and the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** (HHS) recently issued final rules governing certain organ transplantation policies. The CMS [final rule](#) applies to the new mandatory alternative payment model, the Increasing Organ Transplant Access (IOTA) Model. The model, which will be active for six years, will test whether performance-based upside risk payments or downside risk payments paid to, or owed by, participating kidney transplant hospitals increase access to kidney transplants for patients with end-stage renal disease (ESRD) while preserving or enhancing the quality of care and reducing Medicare expenditures. In another development, HHS has issued a [final rule](#) (effective Nov. 27) intended to expand access to kidney and liver transplants for individuals with HIV by removing clinical research requirements. Meanwhile, the **National Institutes of Health** recently published a [notice](#) regarding a 15-day public comment period regarding proposed revisions to research criteria for the HIV Organ Policy Equity (HOPE) Act as it pertains to transplants of other organs including the heart, lungs, and pancreas.

Events

Save the Date for the 2025 Virginia Patient Safety Summit

The 14th annual **Virginia Patient Safety Summit** presented by the **VHHA Center for Healthcare Excellence** and the **VHHA Foundation** is scheduled for Feb. 27, 2025 (9:30 a.m.-3:45 p.m.) as a virtual event. The theme for the upcoming Summit is “Improvement Unleashed: Strategies for Sustainable Change.” The event will be an opportunity to highlight strategies for supporting and sustaining

improvements in health care quality and safety, including the use of robust process improvement methodologies. The event is being hosted in collaboration with the **Virginia Nurses Foundation**, the **Medical Society of Virginia**, the **Virginia Pharmacists Association**, and the **Virginia Society of Health-System Pharmacists**. Event registration is scheduled to open Dec. 16.

Register for Dec. 4 Public Health Webinar for Virginia Hospital Teams

Hospital and health system team members are invited to join an upcoming webinar featuring updates from the **Virginia Department of Health (VDH)** on public health topics of interest. The latest webinar in the quarterly series is scheduled for Dec. 4 at noon ET. Topics covered in the ongoing webinar series may include disease surveillance, modeling, influenza, and unique pathogens, among others. Additional topics may vary depending on current events. The webinar content is focused on Virginia hospital and health systems audiences. Register for the webinar [here](#).

Register for Dec. 18 Webinar on Winter Weather Preparedness Activities

The **Virginia Healthcare Emergency Management Program (VHEMP)** will host winter weather preparedness activities on Dec. 18, including a 9 a.m. communications test through the **Virginia Healthcare Alerting & Status System (VHASS)** – additional test details will be provided by Regional Healthcare Coalitions – and a webinar at noon featuring a **National Weather Service (NWS)** briefing on the 2024-2025 Winter Weather Outlook. Register for the webinar [here](#).

Podcast

VHHA *Patients Come First* Podcast Features VCU Health CMH Occupational Therapist

The latest episode of VHHA's *Patients Come First* podcast features **Kaitlyn Lynch**, an occupational therapist at **VCU Community Memorial Hospital** in South Hill, VA. She joins us for a conversation about her work, an experience that set her on her career path, and how her life has been linked to the hospital for years. 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.



Around the State



Collin McLaughlin has been appointed Chief Executive Officer for **LewisGale Medical Center**. He previously served as CEO of Valley Hospital Medical Center in Las Vegas, NV. He holds a bachelor's degree in management from Brigham Young University and a master's degree in healthcare administration from The George Washington University. Read more [here](#).

N. Travis Clark, Vice President of Operations at **Valley Health Page Memorial Hospital** and **Shenandoah Memorial Hospital**, has been honored with the Community Star Award by the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health. The award celebrates individuals and organizations making significant contributions to rural communities. Read more [here](#).



Michelle Lardner, DNP, MS, RN-BC, has been named the first Chief Nursing Information Officer at **UVA Health**. Her previous experience includes roles as system executive director of enterprise clinical systems at City of Hope, and senior vice president of clinical informatics at Cancer Treatment Centers of America. She earned a BSN from the University of Illinois and an MS and DNP from the University of Maryland. Read more [here](#).

Rick Talento, CPA, has been named Chief Financial Officer for **Inova**. He has served in this role in an acting capacity since March 2024. He first joined Inova as Corporate Controller in the mid-1990s. He has held numerous positions across the system, including VP of Finance for **Inova Mount Vernon Hospital**, **Inova Alexandria Hospital**, and **Inova Fairfax Hospital**. He holds a BS in accounting from the University of Maryland. Read more [here](#).



Chris Baker, MBA, CHISL, CISM, OSCP, GPEN, has been named Chief Information Security Officer for **UVA Health**. He most recently served as Director of Cyber Security Operations for Thomas Jefferson University Health System. He holds a BS from the University of Minnesota and an MBA from Drexel University with a dual concentration in Management Information Systems and Corporate Finance. Read more [here](#).

Elizabeth Lovell, PharmD, FACHE, CPPS, CPHQ, has been named Vice President of Operations for **Bon Secours Mary Immaculate Hospital**. She joins the hospital from Emory Healthcare in Columbus, GA. Lovell earned a doctorate degree in pharmacy from Auburn University and a master's degree in health administration from the University of Alabama.



Wendy Campbell, Director of ICCU/HS/Dialysis, has accepted the additional role of Clinical Informaticist at **Wythe County Community Hospital**. She has been a registered nurse for more than 19 years. Campbell graduated from University of North Florida in 1994 with a bachelor's degree in business administration with a major in accounting. She also graduated from Wytheville Community College in 2005 with an associate's degree in nursing. Read more [here](#).

Sherpri Giles Small has been named Assistant Administrator for **Clinch Valley Health**. Before joining Clinch Valley Health, Small was the administrative director of physician practice operations at St. Francis Hospital in Columbus, GA. She holds a master's degree in health administration from Indiana University Indianapolis and a bachelor's degree in speech communications and theatre from Tennessee State University. Read more [here](#).

