

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

FEATURED CONTENT

[VHHA in Action](#)

[News Updates](#)

- [CMS Issues Physician Fee Schedule, Home Health, OPPS Final Rules for 2025](#)
- [CISA Issues Alert on Large-Scale Phishing Campaign Targeting Industry Sectors](#)
- [FDA Shares Update on *E. coli* Outbreak Investigation](#)
- [ChartSpan Shares Guide on CMS Proposed Advanced Primary Care Management Program](#)
- [View Recording of CMS Webinar on Hospital Price Transparency Requirements for Jan. 1](#)
- [Health Care Professionals Can Apply for Sorensen Institute Political Leaders Program by Nov. 12](#)
- [Enrollment Periods for ACA Marketplace, Medicare Now Active](#)

[Events](#)

- [American Diabetes Association to Host “The State of Diabetes” Event Nov. 14 in Richmond](#)
- [VDH to Host Nov. 12 Webinar on Frontline Health Care Preparation for Marburg Virus Disease](#)

[Podcast](#)

- [VHHA Patients Come First Podcast Features Sovah Health Family Nurse Practitioner](#)

[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 Hosts Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Leaders Summit in Hot Springs, VA

- Hundreds of hospital and health system leaders and stakeholders gathered in Hot Springs, VA this week for the **2024 Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Leaders Summit**. The theme for this annual VHHA event was “Come Home to Healthcare” and the programming agenda focused on topics of interest and opportunities for networking and engagement with fellow leaders and

national experts. Former **U.S. Representative Harold Ford Jr.** of Tennessee appeared as a Summit keynote speaker to provide post-election analysis. Other keynote speakers included mental health and resilience speaker **Ryan Campbell** and security expert **Todd Miller** of **SSM Health**. View the full program agenda [here](#) and see the speaker lineup through this [link](#). Other conference highlights included sessions on health care cybersecurity, patient and provider experience, and recognition of VHHA Outstanding Service Awards recipients during a luncheon ceremony presented with support from Unite Us. **Augusta Health** President and CEO **Mary N. Mannix** served as master of ceremonies for the luncheon honoring several health care leaders: **Carilion Clinic** CEO Emeritus **Nancy Howell Agee** (Distinguished Service Award), **UVA Health** Professor and Pediatric Cardiologist **Dr. Karen Rheuban** (Meritorious Service Award), **Augusta Health** Board Member Emeritus **E. Stuart Crow** (Excellence in Governance Award), **Bath Community Hospital** Board Member **Wiley “Buddy” Kling** (Excellence in Governance Award), and **Valley Health** Board Member **Harry Smith** (Excellence in Governance Award). View the awards luncheon program [here](#). Read more about the Summit [here](#) and view an event photo gallery through this [link](#). VHHA extends its thanks to the sponsors whose generosity helped support the Summit: **Qualivis, VHHA Solutions, RCM&D, Unite Us, Truist, AblePay, Apollo MD, ARGO Healthcare, Care.AI, ChartSpan, Hancock Daniel & Johnson, Macon & Joan Brock Virginia Health Sciences at Old Dominion University, Meadows & Ohly, The Pavilion, SCP Health, VCU Department of Health Administration, Vituity, WittKieffer, KahlerSlater, Troutman Pepper Strategies, W.M. Jordan Company, and Williams Mullen.**

Virginia Votes for President, Congress, Local Races, and Ballot Questions

- This week, Virginia voters had the opportunity to cast ballots for the next **President of the United States**, the occupant of one **U.S. Senate** seat, and all 11 of the Commonwealth’s seats in the **U.S. House of Representatives**. **Donald J. Trump** is President-Elect after winning the national popular vote and the Electoral College. In the congressional races, the results are status quo: voters re-elected **U.S. Senator Tim Kaine** and the partisan composition of Virginia’s 11 U.S. House seats remains split with six Democrats and five Republicans winning election. A series of local elections were also held around the state including mayoral races in places like Richmond, Roanoke, Virginia Beach, Winchester, and other local offices in communities across Virginia. And there were state and local ballot referenda for voters to weigh. In related news, the **VHHA Government Relations Team** recently hosted a webinar featuring representatives from the **K&L Gates LLP** law firm offering insights about the ways in which the outcome of the 2024 elections could impact health care delivery and policy. View a webinar recording [here](#).

VHHA Hosts Webinar with VDH on Hospital Licensure

- The **VHHA Center for Healthcare Excellence** recently hosted a webinar to provide updates from the **Virginia Department of Health (VDH)** Office of Licensure and Certification. The office administers state licensing programs for hospitals, outpatient surgical hospitals, nursing facilities, home care organizations, and hospice programs. It also conducts inspections to ensure compliance with state requirements, investigates consumer complaints, and evaluates compliance with state requirements. During the webinar, VDH staff shared insights gained from their inspection and survey activity in Virginia hospitals and health systems and discussed recent improvement initiatives that have been undertaken to

make the licensing and survey process more efficient for health care facilities. View a webinar recording [here](#).

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.

News Updates

CMS Issues Physician Fee Schedule, Home Health, OPPS Final Rules for 2025

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)** recently issued several final rules for calendar year 2025 on Medicare hospital outpatient prospective payment system (OPPS) rates, the physician fee schedule, and the home health prospective payment system. For OPPS, the [final rule](#) increases rates by a net 2.9 percent compared to 2024, including a 3.4 percent market basket update, that is offset by a 0.5 percentage point cut for productivity. The rule also finalizes drug payment changes including separate payment for diagnostic radiopharmaceuticals with per-day costs above a threshold of \$630, excluding certain cell and gene therapies from packaging under the comprehensive ambulatory payment classification policy, and paying for HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis drugs and related services in hospital outpatient departments. CMS also finalized updated Medicare Conditions of Participation for hospitals and critical access hospitals, including new standards beginning January 2026 that will phase in certain requirements for hospitals and critical access hospitals (CAH) that offer maternal health services, including standards for the availability of certain obstetric equipment and staff training. The [physician fee schedule final rule](#) will cut the conversion factor by 2.8 percent to \$32.35 compared to \$33.29 in 2024, which reflects the expiration of the 2.93 percent statutory payment increase for 2024. There is no conversion factor update under the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act and it includes a .02 percent budget-neutrality adjustment. CMS is also extending through 2025 several regulatory telehealth waivers. For the [home health prospective payment system final rule](#), payments will increase by \$85 million, or 0.5 percent compared to 2024.

FDA Shares Update on E. coli Outbreak Investigation

The **U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** is [investigating](#) since-recalled slivered onions served at McDonald's as the likely source of an *E. coli* outbreak that has infected 90 people from 13 states through Oct. 30. Among the 83 people impacted for whom information is available, 27 have been hospitalized, and 2 people developed a type of kidney failure called hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), a serious condition that can cause kidney failure. One death has been reported from an older adult in Colorado. Slivered onions previously served on McDonald's Quarter Pounder sandwiches are the likely

source of contamination, based on epidemiologic and traceback data. McDonald's is no longer using slivered onions on Quarter Pounders at stores in affected states. Diced onions used at McDonald's have not been implicated in this outbreak. For those impacted, symptoms have begun from a few days after consuming contaminated food up to nine days later. Symptoms include severe stomach cramps, diarrhea, fever, nausea, and/or vomiting. Some infections can cause severe bloody diarrhea and lead to life-threatening conditions such as HUS, or the development of high blood pressure, chronic kidney disease, and neurologic problems.

CISA Issues Alert on Large-Scale Phishing Campaign Targeting Industry Sectors

The **Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)** recently issued an advisory regarding reports "of a large-scale spear-phishing campaign targeting organizations in several sectors." The alleged perpetrator is a "foreign threat actor, often posing as a trusted entity," that sends "spear-phishing emails containing malicious remote desktop protocol (RDP) files to targeted organizations to connect to and access files stored on the target's network. Once access has been gained, the threat actor may pursue additional activity, such as deploying malicious code to achieve persistent access to the target's network." Read more details and CISA recommendations [here](#).

ChartSpan Shares Guide on CMS Proposed Advanced Primary Care Management Program

[ChartSpan](#), a [VHHA Solutions](#) endorsed partner, has released an educational guide covering the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)** proposed new program, Advanced Primary Care Management (ACPM). For more information about who is eligible for the program, its key requirements, and the benefits of ACPM for providers and Medicare patients, download the guide [here](#).

View Recording of CMS Webinar on Hospital Price Transparency Requirements for Jan. 1

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)** recently hosted a webinar on hospital price transparency requirements including how to encode the data elements required by Jan. 1, 2025, tips for ensuring that hospital machine-readable files conform to the form and manner requirements that took effect July 1, 2024, and tips to support hospitals in meeting the accessibility requirements. Enter the passcode WRj6S.a* to view the webinar recording through this [link](#).

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** is accepting applications for the 2025 Political Leader Program until 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.

Enrollment Periods for ACA Marketplace, Medicare Now Active

Adults and seniors seeking health care coverage for 2025 now have the option to shop for insurance plans and Medicare. The open enrollment period for people to shop for 2025 health insurance plans through the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) [Health Insurance Marketplace](#) began Nov. 1 and continues through Jan. 15, 2025. Consumers who select a plan by midnight Dec. 15 (5 a.m. EST on Dec. 16) can get full-year coverage starting Jan. 1, 2025. Those who select a plan after Dec. 15, 2024, but before the deadline, will have coverage that starts Feb. 1, 2025. The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** (CMS) have an [open enrollment fact sheet](#) with more information. People can also shop for coverage through [Virginia's Insurance Marketplace](#). Meanwhile, the annual [open enrollment period for Medicare](#) began Oct. 15 and continues through Dec. 7. Medicare-eligible individuals have the ability to check their enrollment status and choose or change plans (such as switching from Medicare Advantage and prescription drug plans to original Medicare) during the open enrollment period. In September, the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** (CMS) [indicated](#) that "average premiums, benefits, and plan choices for Medicare Advantage and the Medicare Part D prescription drug program are expected to remain stable in 2025."

Events

American Diabetes Association to Host "The State of Diabetes" Event Nov. 14 in Richmond

The **American Diabetes Association** is hosting "The State of Diabetes" event on Nov. 14 from 8-10:30 a.m. at the **Bon Secours Training Center** in Richmond. This annual event brings together employers, industry leaders, health care providers, payers, and community experts to engage in critical conversations about diabetes. The session will feature networking opportunities as well as a panel discussion on the current landscape of diabetes and its financial impact on employers and employees. Learn more and register [here](#).

VDH to Host Nov. 12 Webinar on Frontline Health Care Preparation for Marburg Virus Disease

The **Virginia Department of Health** (VDH) is hosting a free webinar Nov. 12 at noon whose topic is the "Marburg Virus Disease: Preparation for Frontline Facilities." The webinar content will offer an update on Marburg virus disease (MVD) prevention efforts in the United States and Virginia, set expectations for level four (frontline) health care facilities caring for patients with suspected MVD, review infection prevention and control recommendations for managing a patient with suspected MVD, and provide resources and tools to aid in facility preparedness and situational awareness. The target audience includes frontline health care facility leaders such as infection preventionists, emergency department leadership, and facility administrators. Register for the webinar [here](#). In related news, VDH and VHHA recently collaborated on a public health webinar about the current Marburg virus outbreak in Rwanda. 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. View that webinar recording [here](#) and access presentation slides through this [link](#). 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** recently shared an [update](#) in a letter to clinicians.

Podcast

VHHA *Patients Come First* Podcast Features Sovah Health Family Nurse Practitioner

The latest episode of VHHA's *Patients Come First* podcast features **Iaisha Penn**, a Family Nurse Practitioner at **Sovah Health** in Martinsville, VA for a conversation about her personal and professional path, her approach to patient care, and the importance of breast cancer screening. 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



Baker



Brady



Brown



Campbell

Kathy M. Baker, PhD, RN, NE-BC, Chief Nursing Officer at UVA Health, Joan (Joni) M. Brady, DNP, RN, PMGT-BC, CAPA with Inova, Lisa F. Brown, PhD, RN, Associate Professor with the VCU School of Nursing, and

Cathy L. Campbell, PhD, RN, Associate Professor of Nursing with the UVA School of Nursing, will be inducted as Fellows of the American Academy of Nursing. Read more [here](#).

Stephanie Belcher, RN, of Inova Loudoun Hospital, and Casey Price, RN, of Valley Health Winchester Medical Center, have been named recipients of the “Virginians Speak Up for Safety Award” for the third quarter of 2024. Since 2017, the Speak Up Awards have been presented by the VHHA Center for Healthcare Excellence in recognition of individuals and teams within Virginia hospitals who speak up to prevent potential harm to patients or other staff members. Belcher was recognized for actions taken to escalate concerns about a patient who was being prepared for discharge. Price was recognized for actions taken to enhance frontline staff education on the use of new wireless chair and toilet alarms.