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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, these are some developments of interest to Virginia hospitals and health systems:

Virginia General Assembly Reconvened This Week to Act on Governor's Legislative, Budget Changes

- This week, the **Virginia General Assembly** returned to Richmond on April 2 for a scheduled one-day reconvened session to act on amendments and vetoes **Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin** made to legislation and the [budget bill](#) approved during the 2025 regular legislative session during the winter. In a recent [news release](#), the Governor indicated he acted on "916 bills sent to him during

the 2025 General Assembly session.” He “signed 599 bills, amended 159 bills, and vetoed 157 bills.” On the budget, the Governor authored “205 amendments and eight item vetoes.” The Governor’s budget amendments included several actions related to hospital supplemental payments. On legislation, the Governor amended a bill related to medical debt collection, and vetoed bills to impose criminal penalties on individuals who knowingly bring firearms, large knives, or dangerous weapons into a hospital. The Governor also signed into law several bills that are legislative priorities for VHHA, including measures on insurance prior authorization reform and transparency, behavioral health, and critical access hospital swing beds, among others. The Governor’s legislative vetoes were upheld. The General Assembly rejected roughly 160 budget amendments offered by the Governor, including several related to supplemental payments. The Governor now has 30 days to act on what the General Assembly did during the reconvened session. Beyond the reconvened session, there is also the potential for a legislative special session this year regarding federal policy and funding action that could impact the Commonwealth, its budget, or programs and services. The **VHHA Government Affairs Team** successfully worked on a variety of bills and the budget during this year’s regular legislative session and, in the lead up to the reconvened session, engaged with the Youngkin Administration on budgetary and policy issues of importance to hospitals and health systems.

View Recording of Latest Webinar in EMS Drug Kit Transition Series

- The latest webinar in a series focused on the upcoming drug kit transition affecting Virginia’s EMS agencies in 2025 was held this week and it focused on “Shared Insights from Rural and Urban Agencies.” View the webinar recording [here](#) and see presentation slides through this [link](#). The webinar series is hosted by the **Virginia Department of Health (VDH) Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS)** in collaboration with the **Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association (VHHA)** and the **Virginia Society of Health-System Pharmacists (VSHP)**.

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 work is reflected in recent coverage from [Virginia Business](#), [WTKR](#), and the [Tidewater News](#).

News Updates

DOJ Launches Anticompetitive Regulations Task Force Focused on Health Care, Other Industries

The **U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)** recently established an Anticompetitive Regulations Task Force to pursue the elimination of “anticompetitive state and federal laws and regulations that undermine free market competition and harm consumers, workers, and businesses.” The Task Force is focused on several industry sectors including health care laws and regulations that “too often discourage doctors and hospitals from providing low-cost, high-quality health care and instead encourage overbilling and consolidation” that can impact access and affordability. Read more [here](#).

Nominees to Lead FDA, CMS, NIH Advance in Confirmation Process

The **U.S. Senate** recently confirmed [Dr. Marty Makary](#), a surgical oncologist and health policy researcher, as the new commissioner of the **U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)**; [Dr. Jay](#)

[Bhattacharya](#), MD, PhD, as the new director of the **National Institutes of Health (NIH)**; and **Dr. Mehmet Oz** as Administrator of the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)**.

DEA, HHS Delay Effective Date of Final Rule on Telemedicine Buprenorphine Prescribing to Dec. 31

The **U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)** and the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)** recently [announced](#) a further delay of the effective date of final rules regarding telemedicine prescribing of buprenorphine. The effective date is now scheduled for Dec. 31. This is the second delay announced; the initial effective date was Feb. 18 and the second date was March 21. A White House [memo](#) from Jan. 20 announced the regulatory freeze pending further review. Waiver provisions included in previously extended telemedicine flexibilities regarding the prescribing of controlled substances remain in effect through Dec. 31.

VNPC Accepting Hospital Applications for Participants in Substance Use Disorder Project

The **Virginia Neonatal Perinatal Collaborative (VNPC)** is accepting hospital applications to join its latest quality improvement initiative: “Evidence-Based Dyad Care for Substance Use Disorder.” The project aims to enhance policies and practices for mothers and babies affected by substance use disorders. Running until October 2026, this initiative offers opportunities for learning, resource connection, and the implementation of innovative techniques to improve care within Virginia's birthing facilities. Enrollment is open until May 16. Contact Brittany Watson at Brittany.watson@vcuhealth.org for more information or complete the enrollment form at this [link](#).

Events

Register for the VHHA Emergency Preparedness Summit on April 16

Register now for the upcoming **2025 Virginia Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Summit** hosted by VHHA and the **VHHA Foundation** on April 16 at The Westin-Richmond. “Today’s Challenges, Tomorrow’s Impact” is the theme for this in-person event, during which participants can engage with speakers, sponsors, and support organizations from across the Virginia health care community about opportunities to strengthen the Commonwealth’s preparedness for threats to the health care delivery system including severe weather, active aggressor incidents, crisis standards of care, and special pathogens response. Participants will have an opportunity to earn EMT continuing education credits and up to five ACHE qualifying education hours toward initial certification or recertification of the **Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives (FACHE)** designation. Visit this [link](#) to register.

Register for the 2025 Virginia Healthcare Workforce Summit, a Virtual Event on May 13

VHHA’s **2025 Virginia Healthcare Workforce Summit** will explore innovative strategies for hospitals to adapt their practices, focusing on developing, recruiting, retaining, and supporting team members in a rapidly changing workplace. Sessions will delve into engaging and retaining a multi-generational workforce, building flexibility to meet evolving needs, fostering internal mobility and career development, and adopting cutting-edge models to address workforce challenges. Additional topics include advancing virtual nursing, leveraging artificial intelligence for workforce planning, and refocusing leadership approaches to empower teams. Register through this [link](#).

VHHA to Host April 30 Webinar Providing State Legislative and Budget Updates for Hospital Leaders

The **VHHA Government Affairs Team** will host a webinar on April 30 at noon to provide a recap of the 2025 **Virginia General Assembly** session, including a briefing on policy and budget developments of concern to Virginia hospitals and health systems. The session will also feature a preview of Virginia's upcoming election cycle and a discussion of the evolving political landscape and how those changes could shape and impact health care policy. The webinar is open to all Virginia hospital and health system leaders. Register [here](#).

Podcast

VHHA *Patients Come First* Podcast Features UVA Health Nephrologist on Kidney Health

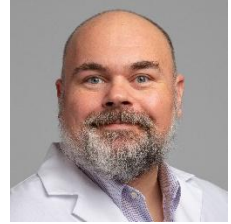
This episode of VHHA's *Patients Come First* podcast features **Dr. Anita Vincent-Johnson**, a nephrologist with **UVA Health**, who join us during National Kidney Month for a conversation about her work, the UVA Kidney Disease Screening and Awareness Program, and more. Listen to the episode [here](#) 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.



Around the State

Virginia Business magazine recently announced the inaugural group of Virginia C-Suite Award recipients, a list that “celebrate top corporate executives who consistently demonstrate remarkable leadership skills, integrity, values, vision, commitment to excellence, company performance and community engagement.” The 2025 inaugural class includes two **Sentara Health** leaders – Sentara Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer [Melinda Hancock](#) and Sentara Executive Vice President and Chief People Officer [Becky Sawyer](#) – and VHHA President and CEO **Sean T. Connaughton**. Read more [here](#).

Dr. Travis Engel, Chair of Pediatrics at **Centra**, was appointed as the National Chair of Pediatrics for the **National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners (NBOME)**. A 2018 Liberty University College of Osteopathic Medicine (LUCOM) graduate, Dr. Engel is a pediatric clinical faculty member for the program and serves as the Chair of Pediatric Medicine for **Centra Medical Group**. He has been a member of the NBOME National Faculty since 2019, most recently participating in the Residency Readiness Index — Pediatrics Focus Group. Read more [here](#).



Dr. Heather Masters, MD, MSHA, SFHM, FACP, has been named the new Chief Medical Officer of **VCU Medical Center** after previously serving in that leadership role in an interim capacity. Prior to that, she served as the Associate Chief Medical Officer of Clinical Operations and a Senior Physician on Call at VCU Medical Center, as well as Medical Director of the One Call Center. She is also an Associate Professor and Academic Hospitalist in the Department of Internal Medicine at **VCU School of Medicine**. Dr. Masters earned her doctor of medicine and master of science in health administration degrees from **VCU** and completed her residency at VCU Medical Center. Read more [here](#).

Amy Jordan, RN, MSN, has been named Director of Behavioral Health for **Twin County Regional Healthcare**, a **Lifepoint Health** facility. She has more than 25 years of experience in psychiatric nursing and a strong commitment to mental health advocacy. She has worked in multiple acute adult mental health settings. Read more [here](#).

