

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:

- The **VHHA Board of Directors** met in Richmond this week for a discussion of issues of importance to hospitals and health system providers ahead of the **Virginia General Assembly** 2024 legislative session.
- This week, the **Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association** (VHHA) participated in and co-sponsored a Healthcare Summit focused on workforce development and challenges hosted by the **Virginia Community College System** (VCCS). The event was held Nov. 29 at the **Brightpoint Community College** Chester Campus and was also hosted in conjunction with **Virginia Health and Human Resources Secretary John Littel**, the **Claude Moore Foundation**, the **Virginia Healthcare Association** and **Virginia Center for Assisted Living**, the **Virginia Dental Association**, and the **Virginia Chamber of Commerce**. The goal of the event was to build support among health care organizations and partners in preparation for legislative asks to support health care program offerings by Virginia's Community Colleges to promote workforce development efforts. The Summit highlighted what VCCS is already doing and strategies for scaling health care programs and pipelines across the Commonwealth and the health care spectrum (nursing, allied health, dental, and behavioral health). Read news coverage [here](#) and view event photos [here](#).
- **U.S. President Joe Biden** recently announced he is giving the **U.S. Department of Health and Services** (HHS) broadened authority to invest in domestic manufacturing of essential medicines and medical countermeasures under Title III of the Defense Production Act. The announcement was made this week during the inaugural convening of the **White House Council on Supply Chain Resilience**. This strategy includes 30 new actions to strengthen America's supply chains

such as a \$35 million HHS investment to domestically produce key starting materials for sterile injectable medicines, the designation of an official to coordinate efforts to strengthen supply chain resilience, as well as a forthcoming **Department of Defense** report on strengthening pharmaceutical supply chain resilience. Read more [here](#).

- **Virginia State Health Commissioner Dr. Karen Shelton**, MD, recently sent a pair of letters to health care providers across the Commonwealth. The most recent relates to a rise in syphilis and congenital syphilis cases and relays information about strengthened Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) screening [recommendations](#) as well as Virginia's syphilis screening [guidelines](#) by locality. The **Virginia Department of Health** (VDH) has also launched a new syphilis [website](#) with information and resources. Read the full letter [here](#). Another recent letter provides information and updates on respiratory conditions including influenza, COVID-19, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), as well as the availability of immunizations that offer protection against each of those illnesses. Read that letter [here](#).
- The **U.S. Food and Drug Administration** (FDA) recently approved Ixchiq, the first chikungunya vaccine. Ixchiq is approved for individuals 18 years of age and older who are at increased risk of exposure to the chikungunya virus. The chikungunya virus is primarily transmitted to people through the bite of an infected mosquito. Chikungunya is an emerging global health threat with at least 5 million cases of infection reported during the past 15 years. The highest risk of infection is in tropical and subtropical regions of Africa, Southeast Asia, and parts of the Americas where chikungunya virus-carrying mosquitos are endemic. However, the chikungunya virus has spread to new geographical areas causing a rise in global prevalence of the disease. Read more [here](#).
- The **Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services** (CMS) recently finalized certain public reporting requirements for skilled nursing facilities that participate in Medicare and Medicaid. The requirements include disclosure of certain investor and private equity company relationships. Read more [here](#).
- CMS recently released [proposed policy and technical changes](#) to the Medicare Advantage and Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit Program, Medicare Cost Plan Program, and Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly, and Health Information Technology Standards for contract year (CY) 2025. The proposal includes changes intended to strengthen beneficiary protections, promote access to behavioral health care providers, advance equity in coverage, and improve supplemental benefits in the Medicare Advantage (MA) program. The deadline for public comments on the proposed changes is Jan. 5, 2024.
- CMS recently issued a proposed rule that would implement provisions of the 21st Century Cures Act specifying that a health care provider determined by the HHS Inspector General to have committed information blocking shall be referred to the appropriate agency to be subject to appropriate disincentives set forth through notice and comment rulemaking. In particular, this rulemaking would establish a set of appropriate disincentives for health care providers using authorities under applicable federal law. The deadline for public comments on the proposed rule is Jan. 2. Read more [here](#).
- CMS recently released a [proposed rule](#) regarding standards for qualified health plans (QHP) offered through health insurance marketplaces for 2025. The proposed rule would require state-based marketplaces to comply with time and distance network adequacy standards for QHPs that are at least as stringent as those for the federally facilitated marketplace. CMS also proposes several changes to standardize and streamline state-based health insurance marketplace operations including changes related to call center standards and eligibility and

enrollment platforms. The agency also proposes policies intended to make coverage enrollment easier and to improve access to dental benefits and prescription drugs. Read more [here](#).

- To provide the health care community with timely information on emerging issues, VHHA will host a quarterly public health webinar series for Virginia hospitals and health systems featuring updates provided by VDH officials. Topics covered in this ongoing webinar series may include disease surveillance, modeling, influenza, RSV, and unique pathogens. Additional topics may vary depending on current events. See more information and register for this series through this [link](#).
- 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 [WHRO](#).

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2. 'Earn While You Learn' Nursing Education Training Program Toolkit Available on VHHA Website

Developed by **Eileen L. Dohmann**, MBA, BSN, RN, and **Patti Lisk**, DACCE, BSN, RN, the "Earn While You Learn Clinical Education Model" (EWL CEM) is a transformative nurse clinical education model where Academic/Clinical Partnerships enhance students' confidence, clinical judgment and skills acquisition, preparing a more practice-ready nurse graduate for employment. EWL CEM accelerates the development of practice ready nurse graduates, creates a hiring pipeline for hospitals and reduces orientation costs. The nursing students participating in the EWL CEM model work part time at the clinical facility (12 – 20 hours per week, when school in session), receive immersive 12- hour clinical rotations, working one on one with an experienced RN Mentor (preceptor), while receiving a stipend and engage in regular mentoring meetings to consolidate learning. Access the toolkit [here](#). – Lara D'Antonio

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3. VHHA Shares Animated Holiday Video Card for 2023

The holiday season is a time to be thankful for our blessings. Here at VHHA, we are grateful for the dedicated caregivers and health care professionals who work in hospitals across Virginia to help keep people healthy. This week, VHHA shared its 2023 video holiday card. The video is a lighthearted short featuring VHHA staff frolicking in an animated winter wonderland. It is our way of sharing a message of seasonal good cheer to members of the Virginia hospital community and so many other folks across Virginia. We wish everyone a safe, happy, and healthy holiday season and a prosperous New Year. View the 2023 video holiday card [here](#).

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4. Virginia Infection Prevention Training Center Releases New Infection Prevention Training Materials

The **Virginia Infection Prevention Training Center** (VIPTC) at VCU has released a new round of training videos and courses. Featuring fun characters, the videos cover infection prevention and control topics important for any infection prevention professional to know. The latest topics include universal masking, CHG treatment instructions for both the clinical team and patients, and a course module on infection prevention and control strategies for pediatric settings. Access the videos [here](#) or visit the VIPTC [website](#) to learn more.

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5. Register for Dec. 13 Webinar on New Emergency Department Security Requirements

Earlier this year, the **Virginia General Assembly** changed state law to require each hospital with an emergency department to establish an ED security plan for the emergency department. That requirement includes a provision calling for at least one off-duty law-enforcement officer or trained security personnel to be present in the ED at all times as deemed necessary and appropriate based on a security risk assessment. To support members in complying with this requirement, VHHA is hosting a webinar on Dec. 13 at noon about the law. During the webinar, VHHA staff and a representative from the Hancock Daniel health care law firm will share information and address questions related to the new law and discuss steps Virginia hospitals can take to ensure compliance. Register for the webinar [here](#).

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6. VHHA *Patients Come First* Podcast Features Inova Health Psychiatrist

The latest episode of VHHA's *Patients Come First* podcast features an interview with **Dr. Samuel Schiavone**, a psychiatrist with **Inova Fairfax Hospital**, for a conversation about his work, military service, mental health care, the condition of seasonal affective disorder, 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](#), [Google Podcasts](#), [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 Saturday at noon and Sunday at 10 a.m. on 100.5 FM, 107.7 FM, 92.7 FM, and 820 AM across Central Virginia and 1650 AM in Hampton Roads, and Wednesdays at 1 p.m. on 93.9 FM in Richmond. Send questions, comments, feedback, or guest suggestions to pcfpodcast@vhha.com. – Salinna Lor

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7. Qualivis to Host Dec. 1 Webinar on the Value of Virtual Nursing

Qualivis, a **VHHA Shared Services** partner, is hosting a webinar today (Friday, Dec. 1 at 1 p.m.) focused on health systems in the midst of shifting toward virtual nursing, a novel approach to care that has the potential to elevate patient experience, enhance nurse job satisfaction, and yield substantial operational and financial advantages for health care organizations. Register for the webinar [here](#).

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8. AHA to Host Dec. 4 Webinar on OPPTS, ASC Prospective Payment System Final Rule for 2024

The **American Hospital Association** (AHA) is hosting a webinar on Dec. 4 at 1 p.m. to provide insight and explanation about the calendar year (CY) 2024 outpatient prospective payment system/ambulatory surgery center final rule and take advantage of the opportunity to ask questions. Register for the members-only webinar [here](#).

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9. Scholarships Available for 2024 Virginia Nurse Leadership Academy

The **Virginia Nurses Association** (VNA) has 15 grant-supported nursing scholarship opportunities available for participants in the 2024 Virginia Nurse Leadership Academy. The program, which is presented by the Virginia Nurses Foundation with scholarship support from VDH, is accepting 35 total fellows. This is the second year for the Academy, which has already graduated more than 30 accomplished fellows. Read more about the program and apply through this [link](#). The application deadline is Jan. 5.

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10. Around the State

Wythe County Community Hospital has named **Megan Aker**, SHRM-SCP, SPHR, as People Services Director. Aker has more than 16 year of human resources experience and earned a master's degree in human resource development from Villanova University, a bachelor's degree in business administration from Averett University, and an associate's degree in social science from Virginia Western Community College. She has certifications from the Society for Human Resource Management and the HR Certification Institute.

Mignonne C. Guy, PhD, a member of the Cancer Prevention and Control Research Program at **VCU Massey Comprehensive Cancer Center**, has been named the recipient of the 2024 Pebbles Fagan Award, which honors those who have made outstanding contributions to public health and minoritized communities through health equity research. Read more [here](#).

The **Old Dominion Emergency Medical Service Alliance** (ODEMSA) recently awarded more than half a dozen **VCU Health** team members for going above and beyond in their commitment and contributions to emergency medical services (EMS). Those recognized include **Gregory Neiman**, MS, NRP, NCEE, EMS Community Liaison, who received the Excellence in EMS Award; **Andrew Modrall**, NRP, FP-C, base supervisor for VCU LifeEvac, who received the Outstanding EMS Prehospital Provider Award; **William Aiken**, VCU LifeEvac, who received the Outstanding Contribution to EMS Health and Safety Award; Matthew Jensen, RN, VCU LifeEvac, who received the Nurse with Outstanding Contribution to EMS Award; **Jennifer Farmer**, NRP, RN, Lakeside Volunteer Rescue Squad and Director of Nursing for the Children's Hospital of Richmond at VCU Transitional Care Unit at Brook Road, who received the Outstanding Contribution to EMS for Children Award; **Beverly Harris**, RN, BSN, CFRN, MSHA, NRP, FP-C, CMTE, Aviation Clinical Site manager for VCU LifeEvac, who received the Outstanding EMS Leadership Award; and **Dr. Benjamin Nicholson**, MD, Assistant Professor in the Department of Emergency Medicine at the VCU School of Medicine, who received the Physician with Outstanding Contribution to EMS Award. Read more [here](#). – Salinna Lor

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