

# 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:

- VHHA held a weekly legislative briefing call for its **Board of Directors** and convened a meeting of the **Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Advocacy Committee** (VHHAC) for discussions about pending legislation, policy, and budgetary issues before the **Virginia General Assembly**.
- VHHA held a meeting of the **Payor Advisory Committee** this week. The Committee is a forum for hospital payor relations and revenue cycle leaders to discuss priority issues and ongoing payor-related challenges.
- VHHA and the **Virginia Neonatal Perinatal Collaborative** (VNPC) are hosting a free, five-part monthly webinar series focused on public-facing maternal and infant health data sources that organizations can use for research, quality improvement, grant applications, and more. The webinar series has been designed for hospital and community partners and will feature presentations from representatives of VHHA, VNPC, the **Virginia Department of Health** (VDH), the **Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services** (DMAS), and **Virginia Health Information** (VHI). Visit this [link](#) to learn more and register.
- "The Future of Medicine Now" is the title of an upcoming half-day symposium for health care professionals scheduled to be held March 23 at the Westin Hotel – Richmond. The conference will focus on the latest in leading-edge technology and research in cardiology and vascular medicine. Topics include treatment for arrhythmia, heart failure, valvular disease, vascular disease, and current research at **HCA Virginia**. The target audience includes physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, technologists, pharmacists, and emergency medical

service providers. Continuing medical education credits will be provided. Visit this [link](#) for more information.

- The **MCV Foundation** at **VCU Health** recently issued a special edition of *NEXT* magazine, which focuses on VCU Health health equity programs and research in the Richmond, VA region. Read the magazine [here](#).
- The **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration** (SAMHSA) recently issued a pair of final rules – one related to the [confidentiality of substance use disorder patient records](#) and another on [medications for the treatment of opioid use disorder](#). The rule pertaining to record confidentiality implements Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provisions to ensure health care providers have more complete and timely information when treating patients with substance use disorder. The rule updates patient consent requirements, aligns disclosure requirements with those under HIPAA regulations, and enables providers to get patient consent just once to share substance use records for treatment and health care operations. The rule on medications pertains to opioid treatment program (OTP) accreditation, certification, and standards for the treatment of opioid use disorder (OUD) with medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) in OTPs. This includes making flexibilities put forth during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) permanent, as well as expanding access to care and evidence-based treatment for OUD. The final rule also removes all language and rules pertaining to the Drug Addiction and Treatment Act (DATA) Waiver from the regulations pursuant to the “Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023.” The effective date of the final rule is April 2, 2024, and the compliance date is Oct. 2, 2024. In a related development, SAMHSA recently updated its [Overdose Prevention and Response Toolkit](#) that includes basic information on overdose prevention and treatment as well as guidance and resources for health care providers and prescribers.
- The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** (CMS) recently released a proposed rule to strengthen oversight of organizations that accredit health care providers certified by Medicare and Medicaid. The rule would prohibit accrediting organizations from giving a hospital or other health care facility advance notice of a survey, penalize hospitals that receive a condition-level citation during a validation survey conducted by state surveyors on behalf of CMS, and require accrediting organizations to use the CMS conditions of participation as minimum accreditation standards. The rule would also revise the survey process for psychiatric hospitals, among other provisions. CMS will publish the rule in the Feb. 15 Federal Register, with comments due by April 15. Read more [here](#).
- CMS has updated guidance for hospitals and critical access hospitals (CAH) to permit health care team members to share patient information and orders with each other through a HIPAA-compliant secure texting platform that complies with Medicare and Medicaid conditions of participation. Read more [here](#).
- The **Pacific Americans with Disabilities Act Center** is hosting its annual conference as a virtual event on Feb. 27-28. The program includes presentations on ADA in health care settings such as effective communication requirements. View a conference agenda [here](#) and registration information is [here](#). Anyone interested in joining the peer group for ADA in health care settings, which is for health care personnel with responsibilities for ADA compliance, are encouraged to contact the Mid-Atlantic ADA Center at [adatraining@transcen.org](mailto:adatraining@transcen.org).

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## 2. Virginia General Assembly Money Committees Reveal State Budget Amendment Proposals

This week at the **Virginia General Assembly** began with members of the **House Appropriations Committee** and the **Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee** unveiling their versions of state budget legislation reflecting [amendments](#) to the two-year state spending plan proposed by **Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin** in December 2023. Several steps still remain in the process prior to final approval. The budget legislation ultimately adopted by lawmakers will govern state expenditures for the two-year period beginning July 1, 2024. Health care-related highlights from the **House of Delegates** ([House Bill 30](#)) and the **Virginia Senate** ([Senate Bill 30](#)) budget proposals include:

- Both retain the recommendation of \$8 million over the biennium for the “Earn While You Learn” health care workforce training program. Both bills appear to preserve many of the Governor’s recommendations for health care loan repayment and scholarship programs, as well as provisions to enhance funding for nursing scholarships, loan repayment, and incentive programs as part of efforts to attract and retain nurses and nurse faculty to address workforce shortages.
- The House budget also includes \$1 million over the biennium for an increase in 10 residency slots for OB/GYN services. Both budgets largely retain the Governor’s recommendations for investments in behavioral health, with each providing additional funding for STEP-VA initiatives and crisis stabilization units. The House budget removes funding for the Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Department Program (CPEP) in state fiscal year (SFY) 2025, but the Senate budget retains the \$10 million in CPEP funding in the introduced budget.
- The House plan includes funding for Medicaid developmental disability (DD) waiver slots, suggesting an annual phased-in approach of 1,720 slots as well as a modest increase in DD waiver service rates to assist providers. The Senate budget would add 3,440 DD waiver slots over the biennium, with a quarterly release for provider capacity development.
- In response to growing Medicaid enrollment and projected program costs, the House budget sets aside \$125 million (the Senate sets aside \$150 million) as reserves in the event of unexpected increases in Medicaid expenditures.
- Both budgets include \$12.5 million in SFY 2024 and \$12.5 million in SFY 2025 to backfill a shortfall in emergency medical services by eliminating the transfer of a portion of the \$6.25-for-Life funds to the state general fund. The Trauma Fund is expected to receive \$2.3 million from this action.

VHHA has advocated for budget amendments focused on the Virginia Trauma Fund, behavioral health and workforce development initiatives, and support for community health workers, among other items. Now that the amended bills have been unveiled, each chamber will debate and ultimately vote on its version of the budget. Then, a select committee of legislators from the House and Senate known as “conferees” will be appointed to engage in negotiations to reconcile differences between the two bills and produce a compromise budget. That plan will then be presented in each chamber for debate and ultimately a vote for approval, presumably prior to the scheduled March 9 adjournment of the legislative session. Once approved, the budget will be sent to Governor Youngkin for his review, at which point he has the ability to amend elements of the budget bill. He can also reject budget provisions with a line-item veto. Legislators are scheduled to return to Richmond on April 17 to consider and act upon the Governor’s changes to the budget. Throughout this process, the **VHHA Government Relations Team** will continue its vigorous engagement with legislators and the Youngkin Administration to advocate for budgetary action that supports Virginia hospitals, health systems, and community health in the Commonwealth. – Julie Dime

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This week, VHHA, the **VHHA Foundation**, and the **VHHA Center for Healthcare Excellence** hosted the thirteenth annual [Virginia Patient Safety Summit](#). This year's Patient Safety Summit – one of the nation's premier patient safety and quality conferences – attracted more than 1,600 registrants from across the health care community, including industry experts and thought leaders. The theme for this year's Summit was "Quadruple Aim: Innovation in Virginia Healthcare," with programming and presentations focused on innovation in care delivery to find new ways to improve quality, enhance the patient experience, expand safety initiatives, increase efficiency, and reduce costs. Keynote speakers for the 2024 Summit included **Dr. Aditi Mallick**, MD, the Acting Director of the **CMS Office of Minority Health**; and **Bonnie Clipper**, DNP, MA, MBA, RN, CENP, FACHE, FAAN, an internationally recognized nurse futurist and nursing innovation expert. Other Summit speakers included **Virginia State Health Commissioner Dr. Karen Shelton**, MD, representatives from the **Dr. Lorna Breen Heroes Foundation**, and leaders from **Bon Secours**, **Carilion Clinic**, **ECRI**, **Inova Health System**, the **University of Pennsylvania**, **UVA Health**, **VCU Health**, and the **Virginia Neonatal Perinatal Collaborative**. During the Summit, **Dr. Jake O'Shea**, MD, MBA, **HCA Healthcare** Vice President and Chief Health Information Officer; **Dr. Joel Bundy**, MD, FACHE, **Sentara Health** Senior Vice President and Chief Medical and Quality Officer; and **Mary Morin**, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, **Sentara Health** Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer, were honored as recipients of the 2024 "Imagine a Virginia" Senior Leader Quality and Patient Safety Award from VHHA. The Summit was presented in collaboration with **Medical Society of Virginia**, the **Virginia Nurses Association**, and the **Virginia Pharmacists Association**), federal and state health partner organizations and event sponsor organizations: [Centra Health](#), [Sentara Health](#), [VCU Health](#), the [Language Group](#), [Qualivis](#), and [Vizient](#). Read more about the event [here](#). – Abraham Segres and Kristie Burnette

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#### 4. Save the Date for Virginia Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Summit, April 24 in Richmond

Save the date for the **2024 Virginia Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Summit**, which is scheduled for April 24 at The Westin – Richmond. The theme for this year's Summit is "Human Caused Incidents" and it will feature speakers, panelists, sponsors, and support organizations focused on how the Virginia health care community can strengthen its preparedness for such situations. Visit this [link](#) for more information and contact Isaac Rife at [irife@vhha.com](mailto:irife@vhha.com) to learn about sponsorship opportunities.

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#### 5. Register for the 2024 Virginia Healthcare Workforce Summit on March 19

Registration is open for the **2024 Virginia Healthcare Workforce Summit** scheduled for March 19 (9:15 a.m.-3:30 p.m.) as a virtual event. The Summit theme is "Strengthening the Healthcare Workforce through Innovation and Purpose" and will focus on opportunities to invest in, realign, and refocus efforts to support and strengthen the health care workforce. Summit programming will feature strategies for attracting and retaining talent in the post-pandemic workplace, effective strategies for promoting employee well-being and safety, streamlining processes with rapidly advancing technologies including artificial intelligence, and upskilling and career advancement opportunities as a win-win for the workforce and employers. This is a virtual event that is free to staff members of Virginia hospitals and students. Register for the Summit through this [link](#) using the e-mail address of the person attending so they can receive verification codes the day of the event to ensure smooth access to the virtual event platform. Please send any event or registration questions to [events@vhha.com](mailto:events@vhha.com). – Sharon Alexander

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## 6. VHHA *Patients Come First* Podcast Features Carilion Nurse Leader Discussing Moxie Robots

The latest episode of VHHA's *Patients Come First* podcast features **Kristie Williams**, Vice President of **Carilion Giles Community Hospital** and **Carilion Tazewell Community Hospital**. She joins us for a conversation about her career path in nursing, the recent implementation of Moxie Robots at Carilion Giles to support staff delivering patient care, 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](mailto:pcfpodcast@vhha.com). – Salinna Lor

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## 7. NIST Issues Updated Guidance on Cybersecurity HIPAA Security Rule Compliance

The **National Institute of Standards and Technology** (NIST) recently issued [updated guidance](#) for HIPAA-covered organizations to assist them in assessing and managing cybersecurity risks to electronic protected health information and compliance with the HIPAA security rule. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office for Civil Rights collaborated with NIST on the guidance, which was last updated in 2008. The guidance identifies activities that regulated entities can consider implementing as part of an information security program as well as offering resources to help in complying with the HIPAA security rule.

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## 8. FTC, HHS Solicit Public Comment Regarding Impact of Contracting, Competition on Drug Prices

The **Federal Trade Commission** (FTC) and the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** (HHS) are soliciting public comment under a request for information pertaining to market concentration among large health care group purchasing organizations (GPO) and drug wholesalers, as well as information about contracting practices. The purpose of the request is to provide the federal agencies with an understanding of how the practices of two pharmaceutical drug middlemen groups – GPOs and drug wholesalers – may contribute to generic drug shortages. Comments may be submitted through this [link](#).

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## 9. FDA Approves Medication to Reduce Allergic Reaction to Accidental Food Exposure

The **U.S. Food and Drug Administration** (FDA) recently approved Xolair (omalizumab) injection for immunoglobulin E-mediated food allergy in certain adults and children 1 year or older for the reduction of allergic reactions (Type I), including reducing the risk of anaphylaxis, that may occur with accidental exposure to one or more foods. Patients who take Xolair must continue to avoid foods they are allergic to. Xolair is intended for repeated use to reduce the risk of allergic reactions and is not approved for the immediate emergency treatment of allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis. Xolair was originally

approved in 2003 for the treatment of moderate to severe persistent allergic asthma in certain patients. Xolair is also approved to treat chronic spontaneous urticaria and chronic rhinosinusitis with nasal polyps in certain patients. Read more [here](#).

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## 10. Around the State

**Augusta Health** Senior Vice President **Crystal Farmer**, MBA, MSN, RN, FACHE, has assumed the dual responsibilities of Chief Operating Officer and Chief Nursing Officer for the health system. Farmer has served as chief nursing officer at Augusta Health since 2018. Read more [here](#).

**Tim Jennings**, PharmD, Senior Vice President and Chief Pharmacy Officer at **Sentara Health**; **Shawn Myers**, Vice President of Pharmacy and Ancillary Clinical Services at **Encompass Health**; and **Melanie Massiah-White**, Vice President and Chief Pharmacy Officer at **Inova Health System**, have been named to the *Becker's Hospital Review* list of 75 hospital and health system chief pharmacy officers to know for 2024. Read more [here](#). – Salinna Lor

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