

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 **Virginia General Assembly** and **Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin** have reached a budget deal following a previous stalemate between the Commonwealth's legislative and executive branch leaders. The budget approved by the legislature in March was significantly altered by the Governor ahead of the annual reconvened session in April when lawmakers returned to Richmond to consider gubernatorial legislative amendments and vetoes. With the two sides at odds, Governor Youngkin and legislative leaders pledged to negotiate on a consensus budget plan in the lead up to this week's legislative special session on a state budget plan for the two-year period beginning July 1, 2024. Having reached an accord, lawmakers gathered in Richmond on May 13 for a special session and voted to approve the budget legislation.
- 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.
- Virginia has again been recognized as one of the top states in the nation for patient safety in hospitals, sitting [second overall in the Spring 2024 Leapfrog Group Hospital Safety Grade state rankings](#). The Leapfrog Group state rankings are based on the share of hospitals in each state that earn "A" grades. In all, 40 of 72 (56.3 percent) of the Virginia-based hospitals graded earned top marks in the 2024 Spring evaluation period. In addition to the Spring 2024 Leapfrog grading period, Virginia was also ranked second overall in the [Fall 2023 rankings](#), the [Fall 2022 rankings](#), and the [Spring 2022 rankings](#). The Commonwealth has consistently been a high-achieving state in the bi-annual rankings. This includes rankings of [first overall in the Fall 2021 rating period](#),

fourth in Spring 2021, sixth in Fall 2020, third in Fall 2019, second in Spring 2019, third in Fall 2018, and fifth in Spring 2018. Eight Virginia hospitals were also recently recognized on the Healthgrades list of [America's 250 Best Hospitals](#). Read more [here](#).

- The **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** (HHS) recently issued a [final rule](#) intended to strengthen protections for people with disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The rule clarifies civil rights protections for people with disabilities, addresses discrimination in medical treatment, adds enforceable standards for accessible medical diagnostic equipment, and ensures accessibility in web content and mobile apps. The final rule protects individuals with disabilities from experiencing discrimination in any program or activity receiving funding from HHS, and it updates existing requirements to make them consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The rule takes effect 60 days after publication in the May 9 Federal Register. Read more [here](#).
- The Administration of **U.S. President Joe Biden** recently issued a [memo](#) regarding updated critical infrastructure protection requirements, which include the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) acting as the National Coordinator for Security and Resilience, and heightening the importance of minimum security and resilience requirements within health care and other critical infrastructure sectors, consistent with the National Cybersecurity Strategy. In related news, CISA has [extended the public comment period](#) on a [proposed rule](#) that would implement cyber incident and ransom payment reporting requirements under the Cyber Incident Reporting for Critical Infrastructure Act of 2022. The rule would require critical infrastructure organizations, including hospitals and health systems, to report a covered cyber incident to the federal government within 72 hours and ransom payments within 24 hours, among other provisions.
- The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** (CMS) is seeking public comment on [draft guidance](#) regarding the Medicare Drug Price Negotiation Program, which will negotiate prices with drug makers for certain high-cost, sole-source drugs and apply them beginning in 2026. The drug price program is a provision of the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022. July 2 is the public comment deadline. Read more [here](#).
- The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** (CMS) has issued a [final rule](#) to allow young undocumented immigrants who are authorized to work in the U.S. to purchase health coverage through the Health Insurance Marketplace. The rule takes effect Nov. 1, 2024.
- The **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** (HHS), the **Department of Treasury**, and the **Department of Labor** recently shared information about the new process for resubmitting disputes under the No Surprises Act independent dispute resolution (IDR) process that were originally improperly batched or bundled. The new process is intended to streamline federal IDR operations and enhance user experience. Parties eligible to be resubmitted to the federal IDR process will receive an email from CMS with a unique resubmission link. Disputes will need to be resubmitted within four days of receiving the link. Read more [here](#).
- Survey responses are being collected for the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC) [Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care \(mPINC\)](#) 2024 survey. Every two years, CDC invites all U.S. hospitals with maternity services to participate in the survey. Battelle, the organization conducting the 2024 mPINC survey on behalf of the CDC, continues to reach out to hospital points of contact by phone to confirm that the hospital is eligible to participate. This is an important step in the process as no link to the survey will be sent until Battelle has spoken with a hospital contact. In 2022, 55 percent of hospitals in Virginia that were eligible to respond participated in the mPINC survey. Participating in mPINC can help highlight key areas where facilities are performing well and opportunities for potential improvement in infant nutrition

and care. Subscribe to the CDC mPINC listerv by sending a message to mPINC@cdc.gov that includes the sender's name and e-mail address. Learn more about how CDC administers the mPINC survey [here](#).

- VHHA recently hosted a webinar to provide the health care community with timely information from the **Virginia Department of Health (VDH)** regarding the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). A webinar recording is available through this [link](#) and presentation slides can be accessed [here](#).
- 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 recent coverage includes multiples [articles](#) from [WVEC](#), [MSN](#), [WRIC](#), [WAVY](#), [WTOP](#), the [Richmond Times-Dispatch](#), the [Virginia Star](#), [River Country News](#), [Cville Right Now](#), [97.5 FM](#), [Bacon's Rebellion](#), [Inside Business](#), and the [Altavista Journal](#).

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2. VHHA Celebrates National Hospital Week (May 12-18, 2024) in Virginia

This week (May 12-18, 2024) is **National Hospital Week**, an annual opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the many contributions hospitals make to support patients, families, communities, and public health. Virginia is home to more than 100 acute care, children's, specialty, rehabilitation, psychiatric, critical access, and long-term care hospitals that are there for people at a moment's notice, no matter the day or time. Hospitals and their dedicated teams of clinicians and caregivers are essential to a thriving society. In addition to delivering direct patient care, hospitals help train future doctors and nurses, support clinical research to produce future treatments and cures, invest in increasing access to care, promote community health and well-being, and strengthen our economy. In recognition of Hospital Week 2024, [Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin has issued a formal proclamation honoring the work and contributions of Virginia hospitals](#). VHHA has also produced a [video](#) highlighting the central role of hospitals in contributing to the communities they serve. Virginia hospitals are leaders in patient safety, clinical excellence, and emergency readiness. They invest in workforce development to prepare future clinicians to meet growing demand for medical care, and in improving the behavioral health system and increasing access to care, all while supporting local and state economies. Read more [here](#).

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3. VHHA Hosts Annual Behavioral Health Summit in Richmond, Attracting Hundreds of Attendees

Hundreds of hospital officials, behavioral health professionals, and stakeholders gathered in Richmond for the **2024 Virginia Behavioral Health Summit**, the theme of which was "Connection: Building a Behavioral Health System that Serves All." The purpose of the one-day event was to expand knowledge about behavioral health treatment and access for clinicians, health care administrators, policymakers, and community-based providers. The Summit featured innovative behavioral health models, patient-centered strategies, an overview of the expansion of the crisis system across the state, and the opportunity to learn about advances in technology that can improve behavioral health resources. Featured speakers during the Summit included **Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin**, **Dr. Scott Zeller** of Vituity, and stress and mental health expert **Tami West**, PhD. Other speakers and panelists include representatives from **Carilion Clinic**, **Centra Health**, **Eastern Virginia Medical School (EVMS)**, **HCA Virginia**, **Riverside Health System**, **Sentara Health**, **Summit Behavioral Health**, the **Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS)**, and **Williams Mullen**. In addition to program participants and attendees, VHHA and the VHHA Foundation thank the following sponsors for

their support of the Summit: [Qualivis](#), [Vizient](#), [Arrowood Addiction Treatment Center](#), [Augusta Health](#), [Centra Health](#), [EVMS](#), [Initial VII Consulting](#), [Mary Washington Healthcare](#), [Sentara Health](#), [TSW](#), [Universal Health Services](#), [Unite Us](#), [Valley Health](#), [VCU Health](#), [Ballad Health](#), [Grafton Integrated Health Network](#), [Troutman Pepper Strategies](#), [VHHA Solutions](#), the [Virginia Academy of Physician Assistants](#), the [Virginia Association of Community-Based Providers](#), and [Williams Mullen](#). View a Summit brochure [here](#), view Summit photos [here](#), and read more about the event through this [link](#).

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4. VHHA Members Encouraged to Apply for ‘Earn to Learn’ Nurse Education Acceleration Program

The **Virginia Department of Health** (VDH) Office of Health Equity is seeking applications for the Virginia Earn to Learn (ETL) Nursing Education Acceleration Program. For state fiscal year 2024, the **Virginia General Assembly** directed VDH to use Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds authorized by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA SLRF) to establish the Virginia Earn to Learn Nursing Education Acceleration Program. The funding will support education and health care facility partnerships to provide registered nurse (RN) and licensed practical nurse (LPN) students with paid employment during nursing studies to increase clinical education opportunities and the number of practice-ready new graduate nurses. See more details about the request for application opportunity [here](#). May 20 is the deadline to submit questions to Kimberly Boehme (kimberly.boehme@vdh.virginia.gov) or Olivette Burroughs (Olivette.Burroughs@vdh.virginia.gov). Applications are due by June 4 at 11:45 p.m. EDT.

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5. Cannabis-Related Pediatric Emergency Department Visits Declined After New State Law Took Effect

The number of pediatric patients visiting Virginia hospital emergency departments due to cannabis exposure, intoxication, and related medical concerns declined in the second half of 2023, a six-month period that coincides with the effective date of a new state law that regulates aspects of the production, sale, and potency of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) contained in commercial hemp products or extracts. An analysis of statewide hospital emergency department data conducted by VHHA shows that the volume of such cannabis-related visits among pediatric patients had generally been on an upward trajectory over the past several years, peaking in late 2022 and early 2023. From 2020-2023, there were 8,401 pediatric emergency department visits attributable to cannabis use, intoxication, and related conditions involving Virginia youths ages 0-18. More recently, the number of cannabis-related pediatric emergency department visits dropped 14.2 percent from the third and fourth quarter of 2022 (1,307 visits) compared to the same time period in 2023 (1,122 visits). Between the first and second half of 2023, cannabis-related pediatric emergency department visits declined 21.5 percent (from 1,429 visits to 1,122 visits). Those declines occurred in the wake of a bipartisan state law taking effect on July 1, 2023 that establishes health and safety standards for the retail sale of THC and hemp-based products, some of which are sold in packaging which closely resembles that of popular snack items such as candy, cookies, and corn chips. The new law includes state registration requirements for businesses selling such products and empowers the **Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services** (VDACS) to conduct inspections and issue fines as appropriate. The law also requires such products to have clear labels that disclose ingredients. And it places limits on the chemical concentration the products contain to no more than 0.3 percent THC or a 25:1 ratio of cannabidiol (CBD) to THC. Read more [here](#).

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6. VHHA *Patients Come First* Podcast Features HHS Region III Director

The latest episode of VHHA's *Patients Come First* podcast features **Melissa Herd**, Acting Director and Executive Officer for Region III of the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**. Director Herd joins us for a conversation about her career, the work of HHS across Region III (which includes Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Washington, D.C., Delaware, and Pennsylvania), National Minority Health Month, 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](#), [Tuneln](#), [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 9 a.m. 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. – Julian Walker

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7. Federal Agencies Issue Advisory on 'Black Basta' Ransomware Threat

The **Federal Bureau of Investigation** (FBI), the **Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency** (CISA), the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** (HHS), and the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center recently issued a joint cybersecurity advisory to provide information on Black Basta, a ransomware variant whose actors have encrypted and stolen data from at least 12 out of 16 critical infrastructure sectors, including the health care and public health sector. Read more [here](#).

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8. VHHA to Host May 29 In-Person Workshop on Identifying and Retaining Devoted Employees

VHHA is hosting an in-person workshop on May 29 (10 a.m.-2 p.m.) at its offices in Glen Allen, VA that will be facilitated by **Joe Mull**, a featured keynote speaker at the [2024 Virginia Healthcare Workforce Summit](#). The theme of the workshop is "Becoming a Destination Workplace: What Leaders Must Do to Find and Keep Devoted Employees." Registration cost is \$50, which includes lunch and all meeting materials. Capacity is limited for this event. Register [here](#) to secure a spot. Questions may be directed to events@vhha.com. – Sharon Alexander

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9. CMS Extends Medicaid, CHIP Unwinding Waivers to June 2025

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** (CMS) recently announced an additional extension of unwinding-related waivers regarding coverage continuity for Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Under the updated flexibility, states can use certain waiver authority regarding the process of making coverage eligibility determinations. That extension runs until June 30, 2025, one year beyond the previous deadline in June 2024. CMS indicates this step is being taken to "maximize states' ability to ensure that eligible individuals retain coverage" during the redetermination process. A public health emergency was declared during the COVID-19 pandemic, a period in which Medicaid and CHIP enrollees were allowed to retain coverage without an evaluation of their continued eligibility. When the public health emergency ended in May 2023, states resumed the process of eligibility determinations. Read more [here](#).

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10. Around the State

Tammy L. Razmic has been named CEO of **StoneSprings Hospital Center**, effective May 20, 2024. Razmic was most recently the chief operating officer at HCA Florida Memorial Hospital in Florida. She earned an undergraduate degree in accounting and financial administration from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and a master's degree in health administration from Ohio University's School of Public Health. Read more [here](#).

Kay Grizzel has been named Clinical Education Specialist-RN Residency Coordinator of the RN Apprenticeship Program at **Clinch Valley Medical Center**. Grizzel has more than 30 years of nursing experience. Read more [here](#).

Dr. Chris Thomson, MD, MS, MBA, FACEP, has been named Executive Vice President, Chief Administrative and Transformation Officer for **Centra Health**. Dr. Thomson is a graduate of the College of William and Mary and the Medical College of Virginia with further qualifications from the Darden School of Business at the University of Virginia. Read more [here](#).

L'Andrea McLaughlin, RN, DNP, CMSRN, CSSLGB, has been named Chief Nursing Officer for **VCU Health Tappahannock Hospital**. McLaughlin has been the interim CNO for Tappahannock Hospital since January 2024. Read more [here](#).

Timothy Norton has been named Vice President and Chief Legal Officer for **Augusta Health**. He joins Augusta Health from Health First in Florida, where he served as Vice President and Deputy Chief Legal Counsel. Norton is a graduate of George Mason University and Widener School of Law and holds an LLM degree in Health Law from Loyola University Chicago School of Law. Read more [here](#).

Marque Macon, FACHE, Vice President and Administrator, Ambulatory Operations and Provider Services for **Inova Health**, has been recognized by the Clemson University College of Engineering, Computing, and Applied Sciences and an Outstanding Young Alumni. – Salinna Lor

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