

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 **Executive Committee** of the **VHHA Board of Directors** met this week for a discussion of issues of interest and importance to hospitals and health systems.
- This week, VHHA held an in-person meeting of the **Payor Advisory Committee**. The Committee is a forum for hospital payor relations and revenue cycle leaders to discuss priority issues and ongoing payor-related challenges.
- VHHA hosted an in-person meeting of the **Chief Medical Officers and Physician Leaders Forum** at its offices in Glen Allen, VA this week. During the meeting, **Virginia State Health Commissioner Dr. Karen Shelton** delivered remarks about public and population health priorities as well as opportunities for advancing clinical research and patient access to clinical trials in Virginia hospitals. **Dr. Chris Newman** of **Mary Washington Healthcare** also addressed the group, sharing information about health system efforts to improve patient throughput and efficiency.
- This week, VHHA hosted a meeting of the **Workforce Steering Committee** for a discussion of ongoing health care workforce development initiatives and state-level strategies for addressing hospital and health system staffing needs.
- The **U.S. Food and Drug Administration** (FDA) recently approved mRESVIA (respiratory syncytial virus vaccine) for the prevention of lower respiratory tract disease (LRTD) caused by respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in individuals 60 years of age and older. The mRESVIA medication is an mRNA-based vaccine that is manufactured by Moderna.

- The **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office for Civil Rights (OCR)** recently announced that hospitals and health systems can require **UnitedHealth Group** to notify patients that their data was stolen during the Change Healthcare cyberattack on Feb. 22. OCR enforces the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) privacy, security, and breach notification rules that set forth requirements which HIPAA covered entities (health plans, health care clearinghouses, and most health care providers) and their business associates must follow to protect the privacy and security of protected health information and the required notifications to HHS and affected individuals following a breach. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).
- VHHA recently held a webinar briefing for hospital members regarding the 2024 **Virginia General Assembly** session focusing on new laws set to take effect in the near future that impact, or have applicability to, Virginia hospitals and health systems. View the webinar recording [here](#) or [here](#) and access presentation slides through this [link](#).
- VHHA recently hosted the latest installment of a quarterly webinar series to provide the health care community with timely information from the **Virginia Department of Health (VDH)**. View a webinar recording [here](#) and access presentation slides through this [link](#). A recording of a previous webinar in the series about the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) is available through this [link](#) and presentation slides can be accessed [here](#).
- The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)** is accepting applications for the voluntary Accountable Care Organizations (ACO) Primary Care Flex Model that focuses on primary care delivery in the Medicare Shared Savings Program. The model will test how prospective payments and increased funding for primary care in ACOs impact health outcomes, quality and costs of care. Interested organizations must [apply](#) as a new or renewing ACO by June 17. The ACO PC Flex Model will launch Jan. 1, 2025, and run for five years. CMS is hosting an informational webinar about the model on June 6 at 2 p.m. EST. Register for the webinar [here](#) and read more program details [here](#).
- The **U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** recently granted enforcement discretion for laboratories to use conjunctival swabs as part of human testing for H5N1 bird flu given that two human cases only showed symptoms of conjunctivitis before confirmation. For patients who meet CDC epidemiologic criteria and either clinical or public health response criteria for testing, local laboratories must submit the conjunctival swabs along with nasal swab samples to state laboratories. Conjunctival swabs must be collected and transported using the same media as the paired nasal swabs used with the current kit authorized by the CDC. Read more [here](#).
- July 22 is the deadline for submitting public comment to the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)** on the information requirements associated with attestation requirements included in the Medicaid managed care access rule. Read more and submit comment through this [link](#).
- The **Disparities Solutions Center** is now accepting applications for the [2024-2025 Disparities Leadership Program](#), which is a year-long, hands-on executive education program focused on helping health care leaders achieve equity. The program is designed to help leaders translate the latest understanding of disparities into realistic solutions that can be applied within organizations. To date, more than 569 participants from 236 organizations representing 35 states, Washington D.C., Puerto Rico, Canada, and Switzerland have participated in the program. Letters of intent from applicants are due by July 12 and applications are due by Aug. 2. Download the necessary forms through this [link](#).
- The **Virginia Infection Prevention Training Center (VIPTC)** recently released a new training video called *Germ Center*. Featuring fun characters and engaging storylines, this video covers the latest health care wins, losses, and highlights. This is the newest installment in VIPTC's growing

infection prevention training video library. Access the video [here](#) or visit the VIPTC [website](#) to learn more.

- 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](#).

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2. Register for Atlantic Hurricane Season Preparedness Webinar on June 20

Register today for an upcoming webinar about the 2024 Atlantic Hurricane Season featuring a briefing from the **National Weather Service**. The webinar is scheduled for June 20 at noon and will be preceded that day by a communications test at 9 a.m. to review access of **Virginia Healthcare Alerting Status System (VHASS)** user accounts and connections with regional healthcare coalitions. The webinar is being presented by VHHA, the **Virginia Department of Health (VDH)**, the **Central Virginia Healthcare Coalition**, the **Eastern Virginia Healthcare Coalition**, the **Northern Virginia Emergency Response System**, and the **Southwest Virginia Healthcare Coalition**. Register for the webinar through this [link](#) and read more [here](#).

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3. Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission Issues Report to Congress

The **Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission (MACPAC)** recently issued its June 2024 *Report to Congress on Medicaid and CHIP* featuring recommendations for increased transparency in Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) financing, tools that states can use to optimize state Medicaid agency contracts (SMACs), enrollment trends in Medicare Savings Programs (MSPs), and improvements to demographic data collection in Medicaid. Read more [here](#).

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4. FDA Advises COVID-19 Vaccine Makers on Formulation for Fall Season

The **U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** is advising manufacturers of licensed and authorized COVID-19 vaccines that the COVID-19 vaccines (2024-2025 formula) for use in the United States should be monovalent (single strain) JN.1 vaccines to more closely match currently circulating SARS-CoV-2 viruses. This follows a recent meeting of the FDA **Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC)** during which the committee unanimously voted to recommend a monovalent JN.1-lineage vaccine composition. It is expected that the updated vaccines will be available this fall. Read more [here](#).

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5. Proposed Federal Rule Would Remove Medical Bills from Consumer Credit Reports

This week, the **Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB)** issued a proposed rule that would remove medical bills from credit reports by prohibiting credit reporting companies from sharing medical debts with lenders and preventing lenders from making borrowing decisions based on that information. The

proposed rule would amend a regulation used in the implementation of Fair Credit Reporting Act. Public comment on the proposed rule is being accepted through Aug. 12. Read more [here](#).

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6. VHHA *Patients Come First* Podcast Features VCU Health Physician on Liver, Cognitive Health Link

The latest episode of VHHA's *Patients Come First* podcast features **Dr. Jasmohan Bajaj**, a physician based at the **VCU Stravitz-Sanyal Institute for Liver Disease and Metabolic Health**, and a professor with the **VCU School of Medicine**. He joins us for a conversation about his work, research findings indicating a connection between cognitive decline and liver health, 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 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. FDA Issues Recall Notice Regarding Medline Endotracheal Tube

The **U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** recently identified a Class I recall of the Medline Industries Sub-G Endotracheal Tube with Subglottic Suction due to the potential of serious injury or death, which could occur from the detachment or tearing of the inflation tube and other device components from the main tube, resulting in cuff leakage, deflation, moisture buildup and failure to inflate. The Sub-G Endotracheal Tube is used to help patients breathe by inserting it through the mouth and into the windpipe. It also helps drain fluids from the upper part of the windpipe. This tube is used to keep the airway open so that oxygen, medicine, or anesthesia can be given. It is often used for patients with conditions like pneumonia, emphysema, heart failure, a collapsed lung, or severe injuries. It also helps clear blockages from the airway. The use of affected Sub-G Endotracheal Tube with Subglottic Suction may cause serious adverse health consequences, including low oxygen (hypoxemia), unplanned removal of a breathing tube (forced extubation), need for putting in a new breathing tube (re-intubations), ventilator associated pneumonia from regurgitation and aspiration of gastric contents, respiratory distress and carbon dioxide accumulation (acidosis) from inefficient ventilation or failure to ventilate, cardiac arrest, no oxygen to the brain (brain anoxia), tissue and organ damage, and death. Read more [here](#).

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8. CDC Warns of Cucumber-Related Salmonella Outbreak

The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** indicates the agency has recently received reports of 162 people from 25 states and DC who are sick with this outbreak strain of *Salmonella*, including 54 hospitalizations. Epidemiologic data show that cucumbers may be contaminated with *Salmonella* and may be making people sick. According to the CDC, Fresh Start Produce Sales Inc. recalled whole cucumbers grown in Florida. Affected cucumbers were sold in bulk to retail distribution centers, wholesalers, and food service distributors in 14 states – Alabama, Florida, Georgia,

Illinois, Maryland, North Carolina, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia – and were shipped from May 17-21. People infected with *Salmonella* may experience diarrhea, fever, and stomach cramps. Symptoms usually begin 6 hours to 6 days after swallowing the bacteria. Most people recover without treatment after 4 to 7 days. Some people – especially children younger than 5 years, adults 65 years and older, and people with weakened immune systems – may experience more severe illnesses that require medical treatment or hospitalization. Consumers are advised not to eat any recalled cucumbers and to wash items and surfaces that may have touched the recalled cucumbers using hot, soapy water or a dishwasher. Read more [here](#).

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9. VDH Investigates Cluster of Gastrointestinal Illness, Some Hospitalizations, After Lake Exposure

The **Virginia Department of Health** (VDH) recently announced an investigation of a cluster of gastrointestinal (GI) illnesses in people who were in the Lake Anna area over the Memorial Day weekend. Some of those individuals were diagnosed with *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) infections, which can cause stomach cramps and diarrhea (often watery or bloody), as well as vomiting, fever, and chills. In severe cases, the infection can damage organs, such as the kidneys, and lead to hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). VDH has received numerous reports of GI illness, mainly in children, with similar symptoms. Some hospitalizations have been reported. Clinical evaluation and treatment of patients is ongoing. All potential causes of illness, including lake water and food exposures, are being investigated. Read more [here](#).

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10. Around the State

Robert “Bobby” Alicie has been recognized by **Clinch Valley Health** as the facility’s 2024 Mercy Award winner. The Mercy Award recognizes one employee from each **Lifepoint Health** facility who profoundly touches the lives of others and best represents the spirit and values on which the company was founded. Read more [here](#).

Alda Mizaku has been named Vice President and Chief Data and Artificial Intelligence Officer for **Children’s National Hospital**. Prior to joining Children’s National, Mizaku spent 11 years working for Mercy Health System, where she served in various roles, including executive director of data engineering and analytics, and vice president of analytics product management. Read more [here](#). – Salinna Lor

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