

FYI Weekly

HEALTH CARE NEWS FOR VIRGINIA'S HOSPITALS AND HEALTH SYSTEMS

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

State Budget is Focus in Final Two Weeks of Virginia General Assembly 2025 Legislative Session

- How Virginia's two-year state budget will be amended is the focus of much of the happenings at the **Virginia General Assembly** during the final two weeks of the 2025 regular legislative session. The **House of Delegates** and **Virginia Senate** have each revealed and voted on their own budget

bills and the alternate versions from the other legislative chamber. Now, the competing budget bills go into the conference committee process when a small group of House and Senate negotiators are appointed to reconcile the differences in the bills and produce a unified compromise budget bill. There are several provisions of interest to hospitals and health systems in the budget bills including enhanced funding for projected Medicaid spending growth, language on supplemental payment program rate enhancement for hospitals, several maternal health funding initiatives, and increased funding for graduate medical education slots for certain in-demand specialties, among other items. The **VHHA Government Affairs Team** is engaging with budget negotiators and staff in support of funding for items of importance to hospitals and health systems. To conclude on-time, lawmakers need to resolve pending legislative matters and adopt budget amendments by the scheduled adjournment date of Feb. 22. From there **Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin** has 30 days to review bills, including the budget, sent to his desk and take action on them. His options include letting them become law with or without his signature, offering amendments, or issuing vetoes. The General Assembly returns to Richmond on April 2 for the reconvened session to consider amendments and vetoes from the Governor. View a brief video recap of recent action at the legislature [here](#).

VHHA, Hospital Leaders Visit Congressional Officials in Washington, D.C.

- Leaders from VHHA and several member health systems – **Ballad Health, Carilion Clinic, and HCA Healthcare** – recently visited members of Congress including **U.S. Rep. Morgan Griffith** and **U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine** in Washington, D.C. to discuss policy concepts being discussed in the nation’s capital such as potential changes to Medicaid funding for states and health care providers. These visits are part of ongoing federal advocacy efforts facilitated by VHHA to help inform elected officials about how potential policy changes could impact hospitals, health care providers, and patient access to care.

VHHA Hosts Meeting of Board of Directors’ Executive Committee

- 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, including pending legislative issues.

New Resource Added to VHHA ‘Earn While You Learn’ Workforce Development Toolkit

- A new online [resource](#) has been added to the [VHHA Earn While You Learn Toolkit](#) reflecting a newly developed plan and sample budget for providers interested in developing this clinical education program model in partnership with high school certified nursing assistant (CNA) programs. The “Earn While You Learn Clinical Education Model” (EWL CEM) is a transformative nurse clinical education model through which academic-clinical partnerships help enhance students’ confidence, clinical judgment, and skills acquisition to help prepare more practice-ready nurse graduates for employment. EWL CEM accelerates the development of practice ready nurse graduates, creating a hiring pipeline for hospitals that can help reduce orientation costs. Nursing students who participate in the EWL CEM model work part-time at a clinical facility (12-20 hours weekly when school is in session), receive immersive 12-hour clinical rotations, working one on one with an experienced nurse mentor (preceptor) while receiving a stipend and engaging in regular mentoring meetings to consolidate learning. Additional grant dollars for Earn While You Learn are expected to be announced this [spring](#). VHHA members

seeking consultation or additional technical assistance in developing EWL programs are encouraged to contact VHHA Director of Workforce Initiatives **Sharon Alexander** at salexander@vhha.com.

VHHA Hosts Webinar on Immigration Enforcement in Health Care Settings

- This week, VHHA hosted a webinar regarding potential **U.S. Department of Homeland Security** (DHS) immigration enforcement actions in hospital and health care settings. Recently, DHS has issued [directives](#) that rescind previous guidance against immigration enforcement activities in so-called “sensitive” areas such as hospitals or religious facilities. The webinar featured attorney **Jennifer Minear** of **McCandlish Holton**, who provided an overview of DHS enforcement authorities, recent policy changes, and best practices for hospitals when encountering DHS enforcement actions. Minear is a Director at McCandlish Holton in its Immigration Law practice where she works primarily with health care facilities and practitioners.

VHHA Solutions Partners with Crisis Prevention Institute to Offer Professional Safety Training

- Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association (VHHA) affiliate [VHHA Solutions](#) has entered into a new strategic partnership with [Crisis Prevention Institute](#) (CPI), a global leader in offering evidence-based de-escalation and crisis prevention training to a wide range of organizations, including health care providers. CPI has decades of experience working with professional organizations to implement customized training solutions that create an environment of safety in which staff have the skills to recognize and prevent incidents of workplace violence. This includes a record of working with hospitals and health systems to promote safety for patients, families, and visitors. Training offered by CPI helps health care teams prepare for potential risks by equipping them with the skills to identify and de-escalate crises in the workplace to promote organization-wide safety and well-being. VHHA Solutions will work with CPI to showcase its programs to professional organizations across Virginia. Read more [here](#).

VHHA, Community Colleges, On Board Virginia Host Health Careers Webinar Series

- This week, **VHHA**, **Virginia’s Community Colleges**, and [On Board Virginia](#) hosted the second installment in a three-part webinar series for educators, students, and parents about health care careers and the skills and education they require. Webinars in the series focus on exploring high-demand health care roles and the education necessary to work in those professions. The final webinar in the series is scheduled for Feb. 26 from 4-5 p.m. and its focus is hospital roles for aspiring nurses. Register for that webinar [here](#).

Next Webinar in EMS Drug Kit Transition Series Scheduled for Feb. 26

- The next webinar in a series focused on the upcoming drug kit transition affecting Virginia’s EMS agencies in 2025 is scheduled for Feb. 26 at 2:30 p.m. Register for that webinar, which is focused on hazardous medication waste and disposal, [here](#). 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)**. A previous installment from the webinar series earlier this month included the **U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)** on use of the CSOS and Form 222, the **Virginia Board of Pharmacy** on EMS Audits, and the **Virginia Office of Emergency Medical**

Services on the decision by agencies on whether to carry medications. View a webinar recording [here](#) and presentation slides through this [link](#).

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 includes recent coverage from the [Tennessee Star](#) and the [Carroll News](#).

News Updates

New HHS Secretary RFK Jr. Confirmed by Senate, White House Order Creates Health Commission

Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has been confirmed by the **U.S. Senate** to be **U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary**. Kennedy previously ran for President before dropping out of the race last year. **U.S. President Donald Trump** nominated Kennedy for the HHS post and he was confirmed by the Senate on Thursday, Feb. 13 and [sworn-in](#) later that day. Kennedy is an attorney, the descendent of a prominent American political family, and a noted skeptic on the efficacy of vaccines. In related news, the President issued an [executive order](#) creating the Make America Healthy Again Commission that will be led by Kennedy.

NIH Issues Supplemental Guidance on Reducing Grant ‘Indirect Cost Rates’

The **National Institutes of Health (NIH)** recently issued [supplemental guidance](#) indicating that the agency will apply a 15 percent indirect cost rate across all new and existing grant awards, in contrast to previous grant policy. The new policy will be applied to all current grants for future expenses as of Feb. 10 as well as for all new grants issued; it replaces any negotiated rates for existing grant awards. NIH also indicated it would not apply the policy retroactively, though it asserts it has that authority under federal law. Indirect cost rates apply to overhead expenses for facilities and administration and may include expenses such as operations and maintenance, building depreciation, capital improvement costs and outlays for administrative staff. NIH indicates that the average indirect cost rate has been in the 27-28 percent range, with some organizations charging 50-60 percent. This could potentially impact academic medical centers and organizations that conduct clinical research. A federal court in Massachusetts recently issued a [temporary order](#) blocking the new guidance.

CDC Issues Alert on Ebola Outbreak in Uganda, U.S. Clinician Recommendations

The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** recently issued a Health Alert Network (HAN) Health Advisory about a confirmed outbreak of Ebola disease in Uganda caused by the Sudan virus (species *Orthoebolavirus sudanense*). In response the CDC is offering recommendations to U.S. public health departments and clinicians about case identification, testing, and biosafety considerations in clinical laboratories. Currently, no suspected, probable, or confirmed Ebola cases related to this outbreak have been reported in the United States, or outside of Uganda. However, as a precaution and because there are other viral hemorrhagic fever (VHF) outbreaks in East Africa, CDC is sharing best practices for public health departments, public health and clinical laboratories, and health care workers in the United States to raise awareness about this outbreak. Read more [here](#). In related news, **Virginia State Health Commissioner Dr. Karen Shelton**, MD, recently shared a [letter](#) with health care providers about the Ebola outbreak.

Virginia Health Commissioner Shares Bird Flu Update in Clinician Letter

Virginia State Health Commissioner Dr. Karen Shelton, MD, in a recent letter to clinicians shared an update on avian influenza A(H5) (bird flu) activity in Virginia birds. Avian influenza A(H5) has not been detected in people or dairy cattle in Virginia, though it has recently been detected in Virginia in wild birds, commercial poultry, and in birds housed in a zoo collection. At this time, the risk from avian influenza viruses to the public remains low. People with job-related or recreational exposure to birds or other avian influenza virus-infected animals are at greater risk of infection. Clinicians should consider the possibility of avian influenza virus infection in persons showing signs or symptoms of acute respiratory illness or conjunctivitis who have a relevant exposure history. This includes people who have had contact with potentially infected sick or dead birds, livestock, or other animals or animal products within 10 days before their symptom onset. Read the full letter [here](#).

CISA, FDA Advise on Vulnerability Found in Patient Vital Signal Monitoring Device

The **Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency** (CISA) and the **U.S. Food and Drug Administration** (FDA) recently issued alerts advising the health care community that cybersecurity vulnerabilities have been found in patient monitoring devices – including the Contec CMS8000 and the Epsimed MN-120 (Contec CMS8000 patient monitors relabeled as MN-120) – that may put patients at risk after being connected to the internet. The cybersecurity vulnerabilities identified could allow unauthorized actors to bypass cybersecurity controls, gaining access to and potentially manipulating the devices. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

Events

Register for Feb. 19 Qualivis Webinar on Creative Strategies to Build a Strong Talent Pipeline

[Qualivis](#), a [VHHA Solutions](#) endorsed partner, will host a Feb. 19 webinar at 2 p.m. ET on “Creative Strategies for Building a Strong Talent Pipeline.” Discover innovative workforce solutions with Qualivis in this partnered Aya webinar featuring **Dr. Hussein Tahan** of **MedStar Health** and **David Rutherford** of **OhioHealth** during the webinar session that explores talent pipeline strategies like internal education programs and apprenticeship programs to address health care workforce shortages. Participants are eligible for one ANCC CE contact hour. Register for the webinar [here](#).

Register Now for the 2025 Virginia Patient Safety Summit on Feb. 27

The 14th annual **Virginia Patient Safety Summit** presented by the **VHHA Center for Healthcare Excellence** and the **VHHA Foundation** is less than two weeks away. The virtual event is scheduled for Feb. 27 (9:30 a.m.-3:45 p.m.). The theme for the upcoming Summit is “Improvement Unleashed: Strategies for Sustainable Change.” The event will be an opportunity to highlight strategies for supporting and sustaining improvements in health care quality and safety, including the use of robust process improvement methodologies. The event is being hosted in collaboration with the **Virginia Nurses Foundation**, the **Medical Society of Virginia**, the **Virginia Pharmacists Association**, and the **Virginia Society of Health-System Pharmacists**. View event registration information [here](#).

Southern Regional Disaster Response System to Host Feb. 20 Webinar on Bird Flu

The **Southern Regional Disaster Response System** will host an upcoming ECHO session from 11 a.m.-noon on Feb. 20 about H5N1 avian influenza. Webinar facilitators, presenters, and panelists include **Dr. Anna Yaffee**, MD, MPH, Associate Professor at the **Emory University School of Medicine** in the Department of Emergency Medicine; Dr. Tim Uyeki, MD, MPH, MPP, FAAP, Chief Medical Officer for the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC) Influenza Division; **Dr. Srinivas Murthy**, MD CM, MHSc, FRCPC, pediatric intensive care and infectious diseases physician at the **University of British Columbia**; and **Jill Morgan**, RN, BSN, Site Manager in the Serious Communicable Diseases Unit at **Emory University Hospital**. Register for the webinar [here](#).

Register for the Third Annual VCU/RVA Aortic Symposium in March

The Third Annual VCU/RVA Aortic Symposium is scheduled for March 1 (7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.) in Richmond, VA as an event to bring together leading specialists from the Tri-Cities region, as well as renowned institutions such as **UVA Health**, **Sentara Health**, **Eastern Virginia Medical School** (EVMS), and **Bon Secours**. Programming for the day will focus on the latest advancements in the field, covering critical topics such as aortic arch repairs, open and endovascular thoracoabdominal aortic surgeries, neuro monitoring, and genetic arthropathy management. This event will be an opportunity to learn and connect with other providers who care for aortic disease and will include both lectures and labs. View more event information [here](#).

Podcast

VHHA *Patients Come First* Podcast Features UVA Health Neuroscientist on Taste and Smell Disorders

The latest episode of VHHA's *Patients Come First* podcast features **Steven Munger**, PhD, Professor and Co-Director of Research for Otolaryngology at the **UVA School of Medicine**. He joins us to discuss the human senses of taste and smell, how they work together, medical disorders that affect them, the newly launched UVA Center for Smell and Taste Disorders, 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

Jeff Lingerfelt, CEO of **Bath Community Hospital (BCH)** in Hot Springs, VA, has announced his retirement later this year. Lingerfelt, a member of the **VHHA Board of Directors**, has been with the hospital more than four years. In that time, he focused on quality of care and growth, resulting in BCH earning national recognition in being named one of the Top 100 Critical Access Hospitals by Chartis Center of Rural Health. The BCH Emergency Department also received the Press Ganey Human Experience Guardian of Excellence Award, placing it among the top 5 percent of health care providers nationwide. The hospital has also registered a 55 percent increase in surgical procedures, a 66 percent increase in behavioral, and overall clinic volume growth of 40 percent. BCH is engaging a search firm to facilitate the recruitment process for Lingerfelt's successor.



Dr. Craig Cheifetz, MD, FACP, has been named President of the **Inova Primary Care Service Line**. Dr. Cheifetz has decades of experience in medicine, health care, and hospital administration and is a long-serving member of the Inova team. He has been recognized as a Laureate of the American College of Physicians, was named the 2012 National Young Physician of the Year by the American College of Physicians, is a recipient of an Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) distinguished service award, and served as a past national chairman of the Group on Regional Medical Campuses by the AAMC. Dr. Cheifetz completed

undergraduate studies at American University, earned a medical degree at Buffalo State University, and did residency in internal medicine at Georgetown University.