

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:

Virginia General Assembly Reveals Budget Proposals, Moves Past Session Halfway Point

- The **Virginia General Assembly** recently reached two pivotal moments in the 2025 regular legislative session: budget Sunday and crossover day. Budget Sunday was Feb. 2, when the legislative money committees unveiled their proposed amendments to the current two-year state budget. In terms of issues of interest to VHHA members, both the House and Senate budgets fully fund the Medicaid forecast of roughly \$632 million over the biennium, a significant increase in such funding to address projected program needs. The House budget includes language related to hospitals' participation in the supplemental payment program to help enhance reimbursement rate improvement. On maternal health, the Senate budget includes \$2.1 million for the **Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS)** to expand remote patient monitoring to pregnant women on Medicaid. The House budget includes \$4.4 million for Medicaid presumptive eligibility for pregnant individuals, \$2.5 million for a perinatal health hub pilot program, \$2.5 million for a mobile maternal health clinic, and \$550,332 to increase Medicaid reimbursement for midwives. Both budgets include the proposal from **Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin** to increase funding for graduate medical education slots for psychiatric and obstetric-gynecological specialties. The House budget also includes funding to add Medicaid support for five additional medical education residency slots for anesthesiologists and allocates \$25 million to launch an Early Childhood Public-Private Partnership Pilot with private employers to create approximately 2,585 slots supported by public and private funding. From here, the next key budget deadline is Feb. 12 when each chamber must complete work on budget and revenue bills and appoint conferees to negotiate final compromise plans. Another important milestone in the process occurred this Tuesday, Feb. 4, which was crossover day. That is effectively the halfway point in the session and represents the deadline by which bills must clear their chamber of origin, **House of Delegates** or **Virginia Senate**, in order to remain active for consideration by the legislature. After the legislature adjourns (adjournment is scheduled for Feb. 22), the Governor reviews bills, including the budget, sent to his desk and has the option to let them become law, offer amendments, or issue vetoes. The General Assembly returns to Richmond on April 2 for the reconvened session to consider amendments and vetoes from the Governor. Throughout this time, the **VHHA Government Affairs Team** will be at the State Capitol in Richmond advocating for policies that support hospitals, health systems, and public health. View a brief video recap of recent action at the legislature [here](#).

VHHA Hosts Latest Webinar in EMS Drug Kit Transition Series

- This week, 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)**, hosted the latest installment of a webinar series focused on the upcoming drug kit transition affecting Virginia's EMS agencies in 2025. Panelists and topics for the webinar session included the **U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (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.

Report Shows Virginia Hospital Spending Below National Average, Health Insurance Costs Rise Sharply

- Virginia families and individuals have endured double-digit percentage increases in health insurance premium costs in recent years, according to a [new statewide analysis of health care spending trends](#) conducted by **Onpoint Health Data**, a non-partisan analytics firm. The analysis

shows that from 2019-2023, annual private health insurance premiums in Virginia increased 20.2 percent for single individuals and 22.1 percent for families. During the same period, total personal health care (PHC) spending (which includes hospital and professional care) increased by just 1.2 percent. The study further notes that since 2008 single premiums are up 94 percent and family premiums have risen 103 percent. When annual out-of-pocket deductible costs are added to premium costs, total insurance costs have gone up 103 percent and 110 percent, respectively. The Onpoint Health Data analysis shows that the average single health insurance premium in 2023 was \$8,144 and the average family health insurance premium was \$24,251 for people with private sector employer-sponsored health care coverage. Findings in the study are based on data from the **U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)**, the **U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)**, and the **Virginia All-Payer Claims Database (APCD)**. The report evaluates total health care spending, spending by category and payer, insurance premiums, and workforce trends. Read more [here](#).

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 [UR Capital News](#), the [Pinnacle Gazette](#), the [Virginia Mercury](#), the [Henrico Citizen](#), and the [Bluefield Daily Telegraph](#).

News Updates

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](#).

Baxter International Announces all IV Fluid Manufacturing Lines Have Been Reactivated

Baxter International Inc. recently shared that the company has restarted all 10 manufacturing lines at its North Cove plant in Marion, NC, noting that while some lines require additional time to ramp up production, the expectation is that production across the plant at pre-hurricane levels will be achieved early in the first quarter of 2025. Last September, flooding and rain damage from Hurricane Helene interrupted operations at the North Carolina plant that is a major U.S. manufacturer of IV solutions and fluids – the facility reportedly produced 1.5 million units of IV solution daily pre-storm, accounting for approximately 60 percent of the domestic United States production. The storm damage stalled fluid manufacturing and led to reduced product allocation to health care facilities. Read more [here](#).

FDA Approves Novel Non-Opioid Pain Treatment Medication

The **U.S. Food and Drug Administration** (FDA) recently approved Journavx (suzetrigine) 50 milligram oral tablets, a first-in-class non-opioid analgesic, to treat moderate to severe acute pain in adults. Journavx reduces pain by targeting a pain-signaling pathway involving sodium channels in the peripheral nervous system, before pain signals reach the brain. It is the first drug to be approved in this new class of pain management medicines. Pain is a common medical problem and relief of pain is an important therapeutic goal. Acute pain is short-term pain that is typically in response to some form of tissue injury, such as trauma or surgery. Acute pain is often treated with analgesics that may or may not contain opioids. The FDA has long supported development of non-opioid pain treatment. Read more [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. These cybersecurity vulnerabilities identified could allow unauthorized actors to bypass cybersecurity controls, gaining access to and potentially manipulating the devices. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

VHHA Solutions Endorsed Partner ChartSpan Shares Value-Based Care Educational Guide

[ChartSpan](#), a [VHHA Solutions](#) endorsed partner, has released an educational guide covering value-based care (VBC). Organizations interested in exploring VBC need to determine which program will bring additional care to patients and generate revenue without overwhelming a practice. The guide covers several VBC programs based on the amount of investment they require and the results they can produce. View the guide [here](#) or contact Caroline Kochelek with questions at caroline.kochelek@chartspan.com.

Events

Register for VHHA Webinar on Feb. 13 Regarding Immigration Enforcement in Health Care Settings

VHHA is scheduled to host a webinar on Feb. 13 at 1 p.m. 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 upcoming webinar features attorney **Jennifer Minear** of **McCandlish Holton**, who will provide 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. Register for the webinar through this [link](#).

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 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 scheduled for Feb. 27 (9:30 a.m.-3:45 p.m.) as a virtual event. 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](#).

Register for Upcoming Health Careers Webinars from VHHA, Community Colleges, On Board Virginia

Registration is available for the next two installments in a three-part webinar series from **VHHA**, **Virginia’s Community Colleges**, and [On Board Virginia](#) 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. Upcoming webinars in the series are scheduled for Feb. 12 from 4-5 p.m. and Feb. 26 from 4-5 p.m. about high-demand health care roles and hospital roles for aspiring nurses, respectively. Register for those webinars [here](#) and [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](#).

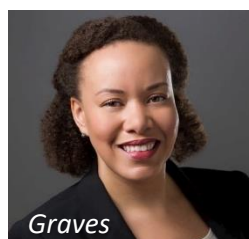
Podcast

VHHA *Patients Come First* Podcast Features Chesapeake Regional Nurse Leader, 'Draft Day' Recruiting

The latest episode of VHHA's *Patients Come First* podcast features **Kimberly Green**, Director of Acute Care Services at **Chesapeake Regional Healthcare**. She joins us to discuss her inspiring story of coming to nursing and advancing into nurse leadership after dropping out of high school, health care workforce development efforts, Chesapeake Regional's innovative Nurse Draft Day program, and much 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



Several Virginia hospital leaders have been named recipients of the **2025 Black Business**

Leader Awards by *Virginia Business* magazine. They include **VCU Health** Chief Operating Officer [Michael Elliott](#), Chair of the **VHHA Board of Directors**; [Elwood "Bernie" Boone III](#), President of **Sentara Virginia Beach General Hospital**; [Roberta Tinch](#), President of **Inova Mount Vernon Hospital**; and [Dana Weston Graves](#), President of **Sentara Princess Anne Hospital**.

Valley Health has named **Steve Motil** as its new Chief Data and Analytics Officer. Motil was previously the Director of Data Analytics at Optum. Before that, he worked at Kettering Health Network for 15 years. He earned a bachelor of science degree in pharmacy from Ohio Northern University. Read more [here](#).



Augusta Health has promoted **Vickie Taylor**, DNP, MS, NE-BC, to Chief Nursing Officer. Taylor brings to the role more than 30 years of service at Augusta Health. She earned a doctor of nursing practice degree, a master of science in nursing degree, and bachelor's and an associate's degrees in nursing. Read more [here](#).

Augusta Medical Group has announced **Cecilia Carpenter** as its new Chief Operating Officer. Carpenter brings extensive leadership experience, focusing on quality management and strategic operational planning. She has previously served as Administrative Director of Quality and Surgical Services. Read more [here](#).



Sentara Health has named **Dr. Thomas Alberico** to its Board of Directors. Dr. Alberico brings nearly 40 years of experience with **Virginia Oncology Associates (VOA)**. He will serve a three-year term, which began in January. Read more [here](#).