

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:

- This week, VHHA hosted a webinar to share information about the **Virginia Department of Health (VDH) Vaccines for Children (VFC)** program. The VFC program provides nirsevimab (Beyfortus), a long-acting monoclonal antibody for the prevention of RSV in infants, free of charge to enrolled birthing hospital providers. During the webinar, VDH representatives provided information on program specifics and enrollment. Officials from the **Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS)** also shared policy and coverage information specific to the administration of Beyfortus in the hospital environment. View a webinar recording [here](#).
- VHHA recently launched a new version of [VHHA.com](https://www.vhha.com). The goal of the project was to update, modernize, and scale down the size of the previous site. The new site provides links to VHHA affiliated organizations – Shared Services, HosPAC, VHHA Foundation, On Board Virginia, VCCRN, and VHASS. The home page now showcases even more of the quality content highlighting hospital team members and the work of member facilities and systems through VHHA podcasts, videos, webinars, and data tools and dashboards. The site continues to provide links and listings for VHHA member hospitals and health systems and information about the Board of Directors. This updated platform will assist VHHA as it continues the important work of advocating for the interests of its hospital and health system members on a wide range of issues. In addition to design changes and content adjustments, some of the new features on the site include a Careers section where VHHA job listings can be shared, a new feedback form as part of the Baldrige performance improvement process, a Health Care Finance section, and a Photo Gallery

highlighting VHHA member events. In terms of basic navigation, the primary site navigation is in the upper right corner of each page (the hamburger menu) and the my.vhha.com member portal is accessible through the person icon. The secondary navigation for each section is accessible on any page in that section by clicking the arrow beneath the word “Navigation” to reveal the pages that are part of that section.

- The application period for the 2024 Political Leader Program at the **Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership** at the **University of Virginia** is open until Nov. 13. Visit this [link](#) for more information and access the program application link [here](#). The previous class featured several VHHA-affiliated individuals – in 2020, VHHA [entered into a five-year partnership with Sorensen](#) to support its programming and help identify health care leaders who are strong candidates for the Political Leaders Program. Program participants are drawn from a diverse group of applicants from across the state, and will focus on Virginia politics and governing, policy issues and solutions, regional needs, ethical servant leadership, and efforts to unite the Commonwealth. This program is primarily focused on individuals who are 10-plus years removed from college.
- The **Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency** (CISA), FBI, and the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center recently alerted organizations to a critical vulnerability affecting certain versions of the Atlassian Confluence Data Center and Server that enables malicious actors to obtain access to victim systems and continue active exploitation post-patch. The agencies strongly encourage network administrators to immediately apply the recommended upgrades and recommended responses to indicators of compromise. The FBI and CISA also recently released updated recommendations to [protect against AvosLocker ransomware](#). Federal agencies have also offered recent guidance to help organizations reduce the risk of [ransomware](#) and [phishing](#) attacks, as well as [guidance for software manufacturers](#).
- The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC) recently released [interim guidance](#) for clinicians with limited access to the monoclonal antibody nirsevimab that was recently approved to prevent respiratory syncytial virus in children ages 2 and younger. Among other recommendations, the guidance calls for prioritizing 100 milligram doses of the treatment for infants under 6 months old and infants at high risk for severe disease due to underlying health conditions.
- This month, the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** (HHS) will begin [transitioning to commercial distribution](#) of an estimated 7.9 million treatment courses of the COVID-19 antiviral pill Paxlovid under an [agreement with Pfizer](#). Authorized for emergency use, the supply will remain available for ordering from HHS through Dec. 15, 2023. Beginning in 2024, Pfizer will sell Paxlovid to privately insured patients and operate a federal co-pay assistance program for these individuals through 2028. Pfizer also will continue to operate a federal assistance program to offer the HHS-procured supply without cost to eligible Medicare, Medicaid, and uninsured patients through 2024 and to eligible uninsured and underinsured individuals from 2025 through 2028, updating any expired product. The company also will provide HHS with an additional 1 million treatment courses for the national stockpile.
- The **U.S. Food and Drug Administration** (FDA) recently authorized an extended shelf life (from 24 to 30 months) for [Gohibic](#) (vilobelimab), which is authorized for emergency use to treat COVID-19 in certain hospitalized adults. The FDA granted this extension following a thorough review of data submitted by InflaRx GmbH. As a result of this extension, some batches may be stored for an additional 6 months from the labeled date of expiry. This extension applies to all retained product that has been held in accordance with storage conditions detailed in the authorized [Fact Sheet for Health Care Providers](#) and the [Letter of Authorization](#). More

information about the use of Gohibic can be found in the [FDA statement](#) describing the authorization for this product.

- As of Nov. 1, [Virginia's Insurance Marketplace](#) is open for individuals to shop for health care coverage that begins on Jan. 1, 2024. The open enrollment window spans Nov. 1-Jan. 15. The availability of the Virginia portal means that individuals do not need to visit [healthcare.gov](#) to shop for coverage. Virginians can also call 888-687-1501 to speak with representatives at Virginia's Insurance Marketplace call center who are exclusively focused on Virginia's health plans and eligibility policies. The Consumer Assistance Center TTY (TeleType) number is 711. Spanish and additional translation services are also available.
- The [independent dispute resolution portal](#) established as part of the federal No Surprises Act has been reopened by the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)**. The process was suspended earlier this year in the wake of federal court rulings in favor of litigants challenging certain regulatory standards associated with the implementation of the legislation intended to protect patients from surprise medical bills arising from emergency care. The portal has now been reopened to out-of-network providers and group health plans initiating new single payment disputes under the No Surprises Act's independent dispute resolution process, including single disputes involving bundled payment arrangements. CMS has also provided new [guidance](#) regarding the processing of such disputes.
- To provide the health care community with timely information on emerging issues, VHHA will host a quarterly public health webinar series for Virginia hospitals and health systems featuring updates provided by VDH officials. Topics covered in this ongoing webinar series may include disease surveillance, modeling, influenza, RSV, and unique pathogens. Additional topics may vary depending on current events. See more information and register for this series through this [link](#).

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2. Register for Nov. 29 Healthcare Workforce Summit Hosted by VCCS, VHHA, Stakeholder Groups

The **Virginia Community College System (VCCS)** is hosting a Healthcare Summit focused on workforce development and challenges on Nov. 29 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at the **Brightpoint Community College** Chester Campus. The event is being hosted in conjunction with **Virginia Health and Human Resources Secretary John Littel**, the **Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association**, the **Claude Moore Foundation**, the **Virginia Healthcare Association** and **Virginia Center for Assisted Living**, the **Virginia Dental Association**, and the **Virginia Chamber of Commerce**. The goal of the event is to build support among health care organizations and partners in preparation for legislative asks to support health care program offerings by Virginia's Community Colleges to promote workforce development efforts. The Summit will highlight what VCCS is already doing and strategies for scaling health care programs and pipelines across the Commonwealth and the health care spectrum (nursing, allied health, dental, and behavioral health). Participants will be asked to work collaboratively to develop plans to improve accessibility and quality of healthcare programs on a regional basis. See more information about the Summit [here](#) and register for this free event by the Nov. 16 deadline through this [link](#).

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3. HHS, Federal Agencies Issue Proposed Rule Regarding Dispute Resolution Process for Surprise Bills

HHS and the **U.S. Departments of Labor and Treasury** recently issued a [proposed rule](#) to modify how the independent dispute resolution process functions under the No Surprises Act. The rule would

require plans to include claim adjustment reason codes and remittance advice remark codes, among other new information, with the initial payment or notice of payment denial for certain items and services subject to the NSA protections. The rule proposes changes to the batching requirements so that items and services could be batched in the same payment determination if they are: furnished to a single patient on one or more consecutive dates of service and billed on the same claim form (a single patient encounter); billed under the same service code or a comparable code under a different procedural code system; or anesthesiology, radiology, pathology and laboratory items and services billed under service codes belonging to the same Category I CPT code section, as specified in the agencies' guidance. Batched items would be limited to 25 items or services in a single dispute. Lastly, the proposed rule would amend certain requirements related to the open negotiation period preceding the IDR process, the initiation of the process, the dispute eligibility review, and the payment and collection of administrative fees and certified IDR entity fees.

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4. Register for Nov. 17 Webinar on Antimicrobial Stewardship, CE Credit Available

The **Virginia Infection Prevention Training Center** (VIPTC) at VCU will host a free webinar on Nov. 17 from 12-1 p.m. about Antimicrobial Stewardship and Shorter Antibiotic Resistance. Hear the latest from **Dr. Brad Spellberg**, Chief Medical Officer at the **Los Angeles General Medical Center**, as he discusses the history, pros and cons, and appropriate uses of short-course antibiotics. CE credit is offered. Register for the webinar [here](#).

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5. No-Cost, On-Demand Infection Prevention and Control Course Available Through VCU

VIPTC has announced a free, on-demand advanced level course in infection prevention and control. This course will focus on quality and performance improvement, epidemiologic methods for surveillance and basic biostatistical data analysis, interpretation of literature for evidence-based practice, and infection prevention program management and modifiable risk factors. Funding provided by VDH allows this course to be offered at no charge to participants and CE credits are available. Register for the course [here](#) and learn more from the VIPTC [website](#).

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6. VHHA *Patients Come First* Podcast Features UVA Medical School Professor, Diabetes Researcher

The latest episode of VHHA's *Patients Come First* podcast features an interview with **UVA School of Medicine** professor **Daniel J. Cox**, PhD, for a conversation about his own journey with type 2 diabetes as well as a grant-funded clinical research study about innovative methods to achieve diabetes remission without weight loss or medication. 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.

– Salinna Lor

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7. VHHA Shares 2023 Fall Conference Highlight Video

VHHA has produced a [highlight video](#) summarizing the annual fall conference held Sept. 27-29 in Roanoke, Virginia. The [conference](#), whose theme was “Aim For The Stars,” brought together hundreds of health care leaders, clinicians, and stakeholders, as well as partner organizations for networking, shared learning, and collaboration. Program highlights included keynote remarks from **Hayley Arceneaux**, a physician assistant at **St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital** and pediatric cancer survivor who recently served as chief medical officer on the first all-civilian mission to orbit (Inspiration4); and **Kay Firth-Butterfield**, CEO of **Good Tech Advisory** and the former head of Artificial Intelligence and a member of the Executive Committee at the World Economic Forum. Other conference highlights included a reception at the **Taubman Museum of Art**, breakout learning sessions on government advocacy, health care workforce development, and health care quality and safety, and an awards luncheon to honor several health care and community leaders. View the conference brochure [here](#) and the awards luncheon program [here](#). – Will Selden

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8. VHHA, VCCRN to Host Nov. 15 Biotech and Beer Networking Event

Registration is now open for a scheduled Nov. 15 Biotech and Beer networking event hosted by VHHA and the **Virginia Coordinated Clinical Research Network (VCCRN)** and sponsored by **VCU TechTransfer and Ventures, Activation Capital, Virginia Bio, VA Bio-Connect, and Go Virginia**. Richmond is home to a robust network of biotech, pharma, medical device, health care and life science professionals. This event will bring together Richmond life science innovators from start-ups, academia, and industry along with regional ecosystem builders. It is scheduled for 4:30-6:30 p.m. on Nov. 15 at VHHA offices, 4200 Innslake Dr., Glen Allen, VA 23060. Register for the event [here](#). – Lara D’Antonio

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9. HRSA Clarifies Hospital Off-Site Outpatient Department Registration Requirements Under 340B

The **U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)** has issued a [notice](#) to inform and remind stakeholders of the registration requirements for off-site, outpatient hospital facilities to participate in the 340B Drug Pricing Program. The notice applies to all hospital types that participate in the 340B Program. It requires hospitals in the 340B Program to register off-site outpatient departments, known as child sites, with the 340B Office of Pharmacy Affairs within 90 days in order to access 340B drug pricing. HRSA provided flexibility regarding the registration of 340B child sites during the COVID-19 public health emergency, which ended in May. Three days before the end of the PHE, HRSA issued a notice instructing hospitals to stop purchasing 340B drugs at outpatient facilities that are not yet included in the hospital’s Medicare cost report and registered with HRSA.

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10. Around the State

Jessica Hipkins, RN, of **HCA Johnston-Willis Hospital** and **Cheryl Anne Jolly, RN**, and **Danielle Stinard, RN**, of **Sentara Princess Anne Hospital**, have been named recipients of the **VHHA Center for Healthcare Excellence “Virginians Speak Up for Safety” Award** for the third quarter of 2023. The award recognizes

hospital team members who speak up to protect patients and staff from potential harm, even when doing so may be difficult. Hipkins earned the award for action she took to express concerns about care being provided for a laboring patient. As for Jolly and Stinard, they took action to express concerns about medication orders for a patient.

Karyn Keay-Otte has been named Vice President of **Carilion Clinic's** Technology Services Group and Associate Chief Information Officer. She joined Carilion in 2019 as a Senior Director.

The **UVA School of Medicine** has named **Dr. Lu Q. Le**, MD, PhD, as Chair of its Department of Dermatology. He comes to UVA from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. Dr, Le earned his medical degree and a PhD in microbiology, immunology, and molecular genetics from the Medical Scientist Training Program at the UCLA School of Medicine. He went on to complete an internship in internal medicine at UCLA/St. Mary Medical Center, along with a residency in dermatology and a fellowship in cancer biology at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. Read more [here](#). – Salinna Lor

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