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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:

- VHHA recently hosted an in-person meeting of the **Chief Nursing Officers Forum** that brings together Virginia hospital and health system nursing leaders.
- May is **Mental Health Awareness Month**, which was first established in 1949 to raise awareness about mental wellness and recovery from mental illness. It is estimated that nearly 20 percent of U.S. adults experience mental illness, which is equivalent to roughly 50 million Americans. Read more about Mental Health Awareness Month [here](#).
- VHHA will host a webinar on May 10 at noon EST to provide the health care community with timely information from the **Virginia Department of Health (VDH)** regarding the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). Register for the free webinar [here](#) and read more about HAPI through this [link](#).
- VHHA has produced a [video recap](#) of the **2024 Virginia Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Summit** recently held in Richmond. View the video [here](#). The theme for this year's Summit was "Human Caused Incidents" and the program featured speakers, panelists, sponsors, and support organizations focused on how the Virginia health care community can strengthen its preparedness for such situations. VHHA extends its thanks to the following generous sponsors whose support helped keep ticket price lows to promote access and inclusion: [Qualivis](#), [Vizient](#), [Centra Health](#), [Ethos Preparedness](#), [Mary Washington Healthcare](#), [Motorola Solutions](#), [Sentara Health](#), [Valley Health](#), [VCU Health](#), [VHHA Solutions](#), [AramSCO](#), [Jensen Hughes](#), and [Pulsara](#). Read more [here](#) and view event photos through this [link](#).

- The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)** recently issued final rules focused on [Medicaid fee-for-service](#) and [managed care programs](#), and on [minimum staffing requirements for Medicare and Medicaid participating nursing homes](#). The Medicaid payment rules align requirements in the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) with the Medicaid program and finalize several changes to state directed payments, including codifying state flexibility for directed payments to match the average commercial rate. The final rule on nursing home staffing standards will require nursing homes to provide a minimum of 3.48 hours of nursing care per resident day, including 0.55 hours of care from a registered nurse per resident day and at least 2.45 hours of care from a nurse aide per resident day, as well as 24/7 onsite RN services. CMS slightly expanded the opportunity for facilities to seek exemptions from the requirements from its original proposal.
- The **Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)**, the **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)**, Europol’s **European Cybercrime Centre (EC3)**, and the Netherlands’ **National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC-NL)** recently issued a joint Cybersecurity Advisory (CSA), to share known [Akira ransomware](#) tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) and indicators of compromise (IOC) identified through FBI investigations as recently as February 2024. Read more [here](#).
- The **Federal Trade Commission (FTC)** recently issued a [final rule](#) that would ban non-compete contracts which prohibit workers from pursuing some other employment opportunities when an employer contract concludes. The final rule does not apply to existing agreements with executives in policy making positions who earn more than \$151,164 annually. While the FTC recognized it does not have jurisdiction over not-for-profit entities, it reserved the right to evaluate an entity’s non-profit status and indicated some non-profits may be within FTC jurisdiction, including “some portion of the 58 percent of hospitals that claim tax-exempt status as non-profits.” The rule is slated to take effect 120 days after publication in the Federal Register. Litigation challenging the FTC rule has been filed by the **U.S. Chamber of Commerce** and the **Business Roundtable**.
- Several pending regulatory changes from the **U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** and the **Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA)** will impact the ability of VHHA member hospitals to continue providing emergency medical service (EMS) agencies with pre-filled drug exchange systems and helping to replenish used or expired drugs contained in drug kits. Historically, VHHA members have supported EMS agencies by ensuring that they have a consistent supply of medications to treat patients in a pre-hospital environment. In anticipation of forthcoming federal rules, VHHA has collaborated with the **Virginia Society of Health-System Pharmacists (VSHSP)** and participated in the Virginia Regional EMS Medication Kit Transition Workgroup to ensure a safe transition to the new regulatory environment. Subsequently, VHHA and VSHSP have issued a joint statement notifying stakeholders and impacted organizations that the pending DEA and FDA regulations will require the discontinuation of hospital and health system provided pre-filled drug kit exchanges and single drug replenishment as of Nov. 27, 2024. After that date, single drug replenishment may be limited due to the new regulations. Questions may be directed to Brent Rawlings at brawlings@vhha.com.
- The **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)** recently issued a [final rule](#) that establishes a 340B Administrative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process as is required under the Affordable Care Act. The rule establishes an ADR process allowing 340B covered entities, regardless of organization size or claim monetary value, to address claims in dispute with drug companies. The process allows covered entities to bring forth claims of being overcharged by a drug company, including where the drug company or its wholesaler denies access to 340B pricing; allows claims for ADR panel review even if the particular issue at stake is subject to concurrent federal court review; requires decisions be reached by the ADR process within one

year of submission for ADR review; and includes a reconsideration process for parties dissatisfied with the 340B ADR panel decision.

- The **HHS Office for Civil Rights** recently issued a [final rule](#) that prohibits entities regulated by the HIPAA Privacy Rule from using or disclosing protected health information to investigate or prosecute patients, providers, or others involved in providing legal reproductive health services. The rule requires covered entities to obtain a signed attestation that certain requests for personal health information potentially related to reproductive health care are not for these prohibited purposes. The rule will take effect 60 days after publication in the Federal Register and require covered entities to comply within 240 days.
- 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 [Washington Business Journal](#), the [Henrico Citizen](#), and [SWVA Today](#).

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2. AHRQ Issues Guide Pertaining to Advancing Equity in Digital Health Care Solutions Technology

The **Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)** recently issued a guide to help health systems and stakeholders assess and advance equity in health care solutions that involve digital technologies. The guide addresses an array of topics including considerations such as lack of patient digital literacy or lack of broadband access (so-called “digital divide” concerns that may impact the viability of health care solutions that involve digital technologies and tools). Read more [here](#).

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3. CDC Recommends that Older Adults Get Additional COVID-19 Vaccine Dose

The **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** is [recommending](#) that adults 65 and older receive an updated dosage of the COVID-19 vaccine for the purpose of gaining protection against the viral variants in circulation including JN.1. A vaccine dose should be administered at least four months following a previous dosage. The CDC’s **Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)** recommended this step earlier this year.

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4. VDH Asks Providers to Report Pediatric ‘Adverse Events’ Involving Cannabis Products

In a recent letter to health care providers, **Virginia State Health Commissioner Dr. Karen Shelton** has shared protocols for reporting pediatric exposure to products containing tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) or cannabidiol (CBD) to the **Virginia Department of Health (VDH)**. The agency has established a special surveillance system to better characterize the burden and impact of adverse events involving children due to THC and CBD consumption. The surveillance is being conducted in accordance with authority outlined in the Virginia Regulations for Disease Reporting and Control, [12 VAC 5-90-80](#), Section H. Pediatric patients who have consumed THC or CBD have reported a range of symptoms including vomiting, hallucinations, low blood pressure, low blood sugar, altered mental status, and anxiety that have led to hospitalization in some cases. Health care providers who encounter patients with this substance exposure are encouraged to promptly report adverse events requiring hospitalization in children younger than 18 and clusters of adverse events involving children younger than 18. Reporting should be done to a [local health district](#) or through the [VDH THC and CBD Adverse Events Reporting Portal](#). Read more [here](#).

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5. Register for the 2024 Virginia Behavioral Health Summit, May 16 in Richmond

Time is running short to register for the **2024 Virginia Behavioral Health Summit**, which is scheduled for May 16 in Richmond. The theme of the one-day event is “Connection: Building a Behavioral Health System that Serves All” and its purpose is to expand knowledge about behavioral health treatment and access for clinicians, healthcare administrators, policymakers, and community-based providers. The Summit will feature 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. Visit this [link](#) to register and reserve lodging accommodations. View the Summit agenda [here](#).

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6. VHHA *Patients Come First* Podcast Features UVA Health Duo Making Patient House Calls

The latest episode of VHHA’s *Patients Come First* podcast features **Patrick Watson** and **Taylor Tereskerz**, pre-hospital clinicians who work within Population Health and Community Paramedicine at **UVA Health**. They join us for a conversation about their professional backgrounds, UVA Health’s Community Paramedicine Program, 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 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, 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 Approves Treatment for Certain Urinary Tract Infections

The **U.S. Food and Drug Administration** (FDA) recently approved Pivya (pivmecillinam) tablets for the treatment of female adults with uncomplicated urinary tract infections (UTI) caused by susceptible isolates of *Escherichia coli*, *Proteus mirabilis* and *Staphylococcus saprophyticus*. Uncomplicated UTIs are bacterial infections of the bladder in females with no structural abnormalities of their urinary tract. Approximately one-half of all women experience at least one UTI in their lifetime. 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. Hospitals Encouraged to Participate in CDC Maternity Practices in Infant Care, Nutrition Survey

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](#). – Mary Brandenburg

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10. Around the State

Adara Brackett, RN, of **Inova Fairfax Medical Campus**, and **Jenica Garnett** of **UVA Community Health Prince William Medical Center**, have been named recipients of the “Virginians Speak Up for Safety Award” for the first quarter of 2024. Since 2017, the Speak Up Awards have been presented by the **VHHA Center for Healthcare Excellence** in recognition of individuals and teams within Virginia hospitals who speak up to prevent potential harm to patients or other staff members. Brackett was recognized for actions she took to advocate for an alternative intervention for an agitated patient that led to the development of a new training program for other nurses. Garnett was recognized for actions taken to facilitate additional review of a patient's status during hospital discharge.

Iris Lundy, Vice President of Health Equity for **Sentara Health**, and **Dr. Gwendolyn Williams**, a hospitalist with **Sentara CarePlex Hospital**, are recent recipients of the **Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities (VCIC)** Humanitarian Awards.

Glenda Joseph, Senior Director of Nursing at **Inova Mount Vernon Hospital**, has been honored with the President's Privilege Award by the Bernie L. Bates Foundation. This prestigious award is presented annually to community members who have demonstrated outstanding service to the Fairfax County community through the giving of personal time, talents, and resources. – Salinna Lor

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