

FYI Weekly

HEALTH CARE NEWS FOR VIRGINIA'S HOSPITALS AND HEALTH SYSTEMS

You are receiving this e-mail from VHHA because you requested a subscription. Questions and content submissions may be sent to jtwalker@vhha.com.

FEATURED CONTENT

[VHHA in Action](#)

[News Updates](#)

- [HHS, DEA Final Rule Extends by One-Year Some Telemedicine Prescribing Flexibilities](#)
- [VDH Issues Clinician Letter on Rising Pediatric Pneumonia and Pertussis Cases](#)
- [View Recording of VDH Webinar on Marburg Virus Preparations for Frontline Providers](#)

[Events](#)

- [Register for Dec. 4 Public Health Webinar for Virginia Hospital Teams](#)
- [Institute for Public Health Innovation to Host Dec. 5 Webinar on Preventing Gun Violence](#)
- [Transformative Changes, Federation of Virginia Food Banks to Host Dec. 10 Legislative Summit](#)

[Podcast](#)

- [VHHA Patients Come First Podcast Features Inaugural President of Bon Secours Harbour View Hospital](#)

[Around the State](#)

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 Hosts Meeting of the Healthcare Safety and Security Work Group

- This week, VHHA convened a meeting of the **Healthcare Safety & Security Work Group**. The Work Group includes hospital safety and security leaders focused on sharing experiences, ideas, and best practices regarding current and future safety, security, violence prevention, and response activities in Virginia hospitals and health systems. Contact **Abraham Segres** at asegres@vhha.com with questions about the group.

VHHA Hosts Meeting of the Payor Advisory Committee

- VHHA held a meeting of the **Payor Advisory Committee** this week. The Committee is a forum for hospital payor relations and revenue cycle leaders to discuss priority issues and ongoing payor-related challenges. Contact **Craig Connors** at cconnors@vhha.com to inquire about the committee.

Virginia Continues Multi-Year Trend of Being Ranked a Top State for Hospital Patient Safety

- Virginia is once again being recognized as one of the top states in the nation for hospital safety scores. The Commonwealth is [second overall among states in the Fall 2024 LeapFrog Group Hospital Safety Grade state rankings](#) that are based on the share of hospitals in each state that earn “A” grades. In all, 57.7% of Virginia hospitals received an “A” grade. In addition to the Fall 2024 rankings, Virginia was also ranked second overall earlier this year in the [Spring 2024 rankings](#), as well as in the [Fall 2023 rankings](#), [Fall 2022 rankings](#), and in the [Spring 2022 rankings](#). The Commonwealth has consistently been a high-achieving state in the bi-annual Leapfrog rankings: Virginia was [first overall in the Fall 2021 rankings](#), fourth in Spring 2021, sixth in Fall 2020, third in Fall 2019, second in Spring 2019, third in Fall 2018, and fifth in Spring 2018. The Hospital Safety Grade program assigns letter grades to nearly 3,000 general acute care hospitals across the nation based on safety data from the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** (CMS), the Leapfrog Group, and other sources. In the latest rankings, 39 of 69 Virginia general acute care hospitals received an “A” grade, placing the Commonwealth second among states in the nation. VHHA shared this exciting news, including a list of all “A” grade hospitals, in a [press release](#) issued this week.

VHHA Shares Polls Results Showing Voters Favor Limits on Prior Authorization, Support COPN

- Virginia voters who have experienced delays or denial of needed medical care due to restrictive insurance prior authorization policies say they favor government action to limit prior authorization. A recent statewide poll shows that among those who have experienced prior authorization decisions impacting their access to care, 76 percent support government intervention on prior authorization. That is one of the findings in a recent survey from **Mason-Dixon Polling & Strategy** which also shows Virginia voters support keeping the Commonwealth’s certificate of public need (COPN) program by a more than 4-to-1 margin. Overall, 61 percent support keeping the current COPN system in place compared to just 14 percent support for eliminating it. By a 70 percent to 24 percent split, voters say they prefer the COPN regulatory system that promotes access to care through the distribution of medical services and facilities as opposed to an unregulated system. The poll also found that Virginia hospitals are viewed favorably by voters, while Virginians hold more negative views of insurance companies, which a plurality also sees as most responsible for rising health care costs. VHHA publicly shared those poll results this week. Read more and view additional poll findings through this [link](#).

VHHA Releases Virginia Rural Hospital Report for National Rural Health Day 2024

- In recognition of **National Rural Health Day 2024** (Nov. 21), VHHA has shared the [2024 Virginia Rural Hospital Report](#) that features key information about the economic and public health contributions made by rural hospitals, the challenges they face, and offers public policy

recommendations to strengthen health care access and delivery for Virginians in rural communities. Read more [here](#).

VHHA Co-Hosts Webinar on Provisional License Pathway for International Physicians

- VHHA recently co-hosted a webinar on Virginia's new Provisional License Pathway for International Physicians. In response to health care staffing shortages, the **Virginia General Assembly** and **Governor Glenn Youngkin** enacted a new law ([House Bill 995](#)) to create a pathway for international physicians who immigrated to Virginia, including those whose careers were interrupted by forcible displacement, to fill workforce gaps in medically underserved communities. This webinar provided an overview of the new law and how organizations can apply its provisions to address workforce vacancies and meet patient needs. View a webinar recording [here](#).

VHHA Shares Video Recap and Photo Gallery from 2024 Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Leaders Summit

- This month, hundreds of hospital leaders and stakeholders gathered at The Omni Homestead Resort in Hot Springs, VA for the **2024 Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Leaders Summit**. VHHA has produced a [video recap](#) of the event and a [photo gallery](#) to showcase some sights, sounds, and images from the event. See more about the Summit, program highlights, and award recipients [here](#).

HosPAC 2024 Fundraising Campaign

- **HosPAC**, the political action committee of VHHA, is in the midst of its 2024 fundraising campaign and needs support from members of the health care community. Financial contributions of any amount, large or small, help HosPAC support candidates for state office who are committed to strengthening the health care delivery system in Virginia by growing the health care workforce, promoting access to care, and investing in public health. By supporting candidates from both parties who champion these values, HosPAC helps advance the voice of the health care community in state public policy development. Please consider contributing to HosPAC to support this important work on behalf of Virginia hospitals, health systems, and their teams. Visit this [link](#) to make contributions and contact Hannah Coley at hcoley@vhha.com with any questions.

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 recent coverage includes multiple [articles](#) from [WRIC](#), [WTVR](#), [WAVY](#), [Blue Virginia](#), and the [Tennessee Star](#).

News Updates

HHS, DEA Final Rule Extends by One-Year Some Telemedicine Prescribing Flexibilities

The **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)** and the **U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA)** recently issued a [final rule](#) to extend some telemedicine prescribing flexibilities. The rule is effective Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2025. It is the third extension of telemedicine flexibilities for prescribing controlled medications. Federal law stipulates that in many cases a prescribing provider may only prescribe controlled medications after conducting an in-person evaluation of a patient. During the declared COVID-19 public health emergency, temporary exceptions to that standard were granted to prevent lapses in care to allow for the prescribing of controlled medications via telemedicine encounters even when the prescribing practitioner had not conducted an in-person medical evaluation of the patient.

VDH Issues Clinician Letter on Rising Pediatric Pneumonia and Pertussis Cases

Virginia State Health Commissioner Dr. Karen M. Shelton, MD, has issued a letter to health care providers about an observed increase in emergency department and urgent care visits involving pneumonia diagnoses. Increased medical visits have been documented among pediatric patients and adults. The **Virginia Department of Health (VDH)** also notes that it is responding “to an increase in cases of pertussis (whooping cough)” a trend first reported in August due to outbreaks in group settings such as universities, schools, religious organizations, and childcare settings. Read the full letter and its guidance [here](#).

View Recording of VDH Webinar on Marburg Virus Preparations for Frontline Providers

The **Virginia Department of Health (VDH)** recently hosted a webinar on steps frontline providers and facilities can take to prepare for the potential impacts of Marburg virus. A webinar recording can be viewed [here](#), and presentation slides are available through this [link](#). Additional Marburg virus resources from VDH can be found [here](#). The webinar content offered an update on Marburg virus disease (MVD) prevention efforts in the United States and Virginia, set expectations for level four (frontline) health care facilities caring for patients with suspected MVD, reviewed infection prevention and control recommendations for managing a patient with suspected MVD, and provided resources and tools to aid in facility preparedness and situational awareness. Rwanda is experiencing an outbreak of MVD, a rare but highly fatal viral hemorrhagic fever (VHF) caused by infection with one of two zoonotic viruses: Marburg virus or Ravn virus. Marburg virus and Ravn virus are in the virus family *Filoviridae*, which also includes Ebola viruses. VDH and VHHA previously collaborated on an MVD webinar. View that webinar recording [here](#) and access presentation slides through this [link](#).

Events

Register for Dec. 4 Public Health Webinar for Virginia Hospital Teams

Hospital and health system team members are invited to join an upcoming webinar featuring updates from the **Virginia Department of Health (VDH)** on public health topics of interest. The latest webinar in the quarterly series is scheduled for Dec. 4 at noon ET. Topics covered in the ongoing webinar series may include disease surveillance, modeling, influenza, and unique pathogens, among others. Additional topics may vary depending on current events. The webinar content is focused on Virginia hospital and health systems audiences. Register for the webinar [here](#).

Institute for Public Health Innovation to Host Dec. 5 Webinar on Preventing Gun Violence

The Institute for Public Health Innovation is hosting a Dec. 5 webinar from noon-1:30 p.m. on “Preventing Gun Violence for Healthier Communities.” **Delegate Nadarius Clark**, a member of the **Virginia General Assembly**, is one of the featured webinar speakers. Visit this [link](#) to create an account and register.

Transformative Changes, Federation of Virginia Food Banks to Host Dec. 10 Legislative Summit

Two organizations, [Transformative Changes](#) and the [Federation of Virginia Food Banks](#), will host the Virginia Food is Medicine Legislative Summit on Dec. 10 from noon-2 p.m. to raise awareness about the coalition’s top priorities for the 2025 **Virginia General Assembly** legislative session. Register for the virtual event [here](#).

Podcast

VHHA *Patients Come First* Podcast Features Inaugural President of Bon Secours Harbour View Hospital

The latest episode of VHHA’s *Patients Come First* podcast features **Andy Spicknall**, the inaugural president of **Bon Secours Harbour View Hospital**, a facility in Suffolk, VA that is slated to open in 2025. He joins us for a conversation about his professional journey, the work of establishing a new hospital to serve community health needs, 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

Megan Lilly, RN, BSN, has been named Director of Patient Safety and Patient Experience for **Wythe County Community Hospital**. She has worked in several roles including med/surg, inpatient surgical services, same-day surgery, pre-surgical testing, extended care unit, and as a patient care manager. Her most recent role was as the Director of Case Management. Read more [here](#).





Ballad Health has appointed **Michael "Mike" Piver** as Vice President of its Orthopedic Service Line. Piver comes to the health system with 25 years of experience as a healthcare administrator. He earned a bachelor's degree in marketing from the University of Alabama and a master's degree in business administration from Troy University. Read more [here](#).

This month, **Kathy Baker**, PhD, RN, Chief Nursing Officer for **UVA Health**; **Alquietta Brown**, PhD, BSN, RN, Vice President of Nursing for **Inova Neuroscience** and **Inova Behavioral Health Services** and Chief Nurse Executive for **Inova Mount Vernon Hospital**; **Dina Dent**, DNP, RN, Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President of Medicine Service Line for **Inova Fairfax Hospital**; **Melody Dickerson**, DNP, RN, Chief Nursing Officer and Senior Vice President of Hospital Operations for **VHC Health**; **Tami Frost**, MSN, RN, Chief Nursing Officer for **Carilion Clinic**; and **Maureen Sintich**, DNP, RN, Chief Nurse Executive and Executive Vice President of **Inova**; were named to the *Becker's Hospital Review* 2024 213+ CNOS to know [list](#).