

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:

VHHA Participates in 'Virginia Has Jobs' Event with Governor Youngkin

- VHHA President and CEO **Sean T. Connaughton** participated in a recent public event held by **Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin** to highlight the abundance of available employment opportunities in the Commonwealth. The [Virginia Has Jobs](#) initiative is focused on efforts by the Governor to promote Virginia's economic strength by connecting talented job seekers with the

ample work opportunities in the state. As part of the [announcement](#), Governor Youngkin touted more than 250,000 open jobs in Virginia waiting to be filled. That includes [thousands of jobs available in hospitals and health systems](#), which VHHA continues to promote through the [On Board Virginia](#) workforce development and recruitment program. See event photos [here](#).

VHHA Hosts 14th Annual Virginia Patient Safety Summit

- This week, VHHA hosted the 14th annual **Virginia Patient Safety Summit** presented by the **VHHA Center for Healthcare Excellence** and the **VHHA Foundation**. The theme for the virtual Summit was “Improvement Unleashed: Strategies for Sustainable Change.” The event provided 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 was 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**.

VHHA Hosts Healthcare Safety & Security Workgroup Meeting

- This week, VHHA convened a meeting of the **Healthcare Safety & Security Workgroup**. The Workgroup 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.

Virginia General Assembly Contemplates Special Session Regarding Potential Federal Medicaid Cuts

- The 2025 regular session of the **Virginia General Assembly** recently concluded, and state lawmakers are already making plans to return to Richmond. Democrats in the **House of Delegates** have introduced a [joint resolution](#) pertaining to the scope of business for a potential special session that includes federal action that impacts the Commonwealth, its budget, or programs and services. That language contemplates, among other things, federal government workforce reductions and program funding cuts that have implications for Virginia’s economy and fiscal policies. The resolution was submitted shortly before lawmakers concluded the 2025 regular legislative session on Feb. 22 after voting on [compromise legislation to amend Virginia’s two-year state budget](#). The budget deal includes VHHA suggested changes related to hospital supplemental payments, full funding for projected Medicaid program growth, maternal health investments, and funding for workforce development and behavioral health initiatives. During this year’s 46-day session, the **VHHA Government Affairs Team** successfully worked on a variety of bills on behalf of hospitals and health systems including legislation on certificate of public need (COPN), medical debt collection, behavioral health, pharmacy issues, insurance prior authorization reform, maternal health, medical malpractice policy, workforce development, health care professional licensure, long-term care, and more. VHHA also actively engaged with budget negotiators and staff in support of funding for items of importance to hospitals and health systems. Following adjournment, **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. The target date is not yet known for a potential

special session in the event of federal government policy reforms to programs like Medicaid that could have funding and coverage impacts in the Commonwealth.

View Recordings of Health Care Careers Webinars Hosted by On Board Virginia, Community Colleges

- **VHHA, Virginia’s Community Colleges, and [On Board Virginia](#)** recently collaborated on 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 first two webinars in the series focus on exploring high-demand health care roles and the education necessary to work in those professions. View those webinar recordings [here](#) and [here](#). The final webinar in the series was held this week and its focus was on hospital roles for aspiring nurses. View a recording of that webinar [here](#).

VHHA Co-Hosts Latest Webinar in EMS Drug Kit Transition Series

- The latest webinar in a series focused on the upcoming drug kit transition affecting Virginia’s EMS agencies in 2025 was held this week – its focus was on hazardous medication waste and disposal; a recording can be viewed [here](#) and presentation slides are available through this [link](#). 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 work is reflected in recent coverage from [VPM](#) and [WUSA](#).

News Updates

U.S. House Approves Budget Resolution with Funding Cuts, Sparking Medicaid Fears

The **U.S. House of Representatives** this week [approved](#) a [budget resolution](#) that calls for \$1.5 trillion in spending cuts over 10 years, including \$880 billion in cuts to the [House Energy and Commerce Committee](#), which has “responsibility for matters including telecommunications, consumer protection, food and drug safety, public health and research, environmental quality, energy policy, and interstate and foreign commerce among others.” That includes Medicaid funding, which has sparked fears that funding cuts to the program will be necessary to meet the targeted budget reductions in the House resolution. There are still a series of procedural steps in the process that requires the House and **U.S. Senate** to reach an agreement on a spending plan prior to any potential deal reaching the President’s desk.

White House Issues Executive Order on Price Transparency for Hospitals, Payors

U.S. President Donald J. Trump this week issued an [executive order](#) that directs the **Secretary of the Treasury**, the **Secretary of Labor**, and the **Secretary of Health and Human Services** to “take all necessary and appropriate action to rapidly implement and enforce the health care price transparency regulations issued pursuant to Executive Order 13877.” The initial executive order from June 2019 applies to the issuance of regulations that require hospitals and health plans to provide price information to consumers, including a requirement for hospitals to maintain a consumer-friendly display of pricing information for up to 300 shoppable services and a machine-readable file with negotiated rates for hospital services; and for health plans to post negotiated rates with providers, out-of-network payments to providers, prices paid by an insurer or pharmacy benefit manager for prescription drugs, and for health plans to maintain a consumer-facing internet tool for consumers to access price information. Within 90 days, the new executive order calls for required disclosure of actual prices for items and services, the issuance of updated guidance or proposed regulatory action regarding standardized price information that is comparable across hospitals and health plans as well as updated compliance enforcement policies.

VDH Seeks Survey Responses to Improve Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome Awareness

The **Virginia Department of Health (VDH)** is seeking survey responses to improve public health reporting and surveillance of Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS), which is a condition that affects newborns exposed to opioids or addictive substances in the womb, causing them to experience withdrawal symptoms during their first few days of life. By participating in this brief survey, clinicians will help identify key areas where additional support or resources are needed. This survey will provide valuable insights into the challenges and barriers faced when reporting NAS cases, helping VDH develop better educational tools to support health care providers across the state. All responses will be used for VDH’s evaluation efforts and any data shared will be reported in aggregate to ensure privacy. Survey questions may be sent to **Julie Keeney**, CSTE Applied Epidemiology Fellow, at juliana.keeney@vdh.virginia.gov or **Dr. Dane De Silva**, Director of the Division of Population Health Data, at dane.desilva@vdh.virginia.gov. The survey is available through March 28. Access the survey through this [link](#).

FDA: ICU Medical Issues National Recall of Certain Potassium Chloride Bags

The **U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** recently shared that **ICU Medical** has identified a potential for some of the product overwraps in one lot being mislabeled as 10 mEq (instead of 20 mEq that is contained in the I.V. Bag) of Potassium Chloride due to a manufacturing issue. The 20 mEq, correctly printed on the labeling affixed to the bag, is not visible or not easily visible without manipulation when the 10 mEq overwrap is in place. Potassium Chloride Injection 20 mEq and 10 mEq, is indicated in the treatment of potassium deficiency states, when oral replacement is not feasible and is packaged in 100 mL bags. The FDA notes that if a health care provider mistakenly calculates a patient dose using 10 mEq, a patient will receive an overdose of potassium chloride. Severe hyperkalemia after large intravenous overdoses causes neuromuscular dysfunction including muscle weakness, ascending paralysis, listlessness, vertigo, mental confusion, hypotension, cardiac dysrhythmias, or death from cardiac arrest. Premature infants, patients on chronic parenteral nutrition, patients who have a history of cardiac arrhythmias, patients with chronic renal insufficiency, patients who have acute renal failure, patients on potassium-sparing diuretics – all are at risk for adverse and potentially fatal outcomes. ICU Medical has not received reports of adverse events associated with this issue to date. Read more [here](#).

FDA Approves Biosimilar Diabetes Treatment, Medication for Rare Lipid Storage Disease

The **U.S. Food and Drug Administration** (FDA) recently approved [Merilog](#) (insulin-aspart-szjj) as biosimilar to Novolog (insulin aspart) for the improvement of glycemic control in adults and pediatric patients with diabetes mellitus. Merilog, a rapid-acting human insulin analog, is the first rapid-acting insulin biosimilar product approved by the FDA. As a rapid-acting insulin, Merilog helps to lower mealtime blood sugar spikes to improve control of blood sugar in people with diabetes. The approval is for both a 3 milliliter (mL) single-patient-use prefilled pen and a 10 milliliter (mL) multiple-dose vial. Merilog is the third insulin biosimilar product approved by the FDA and joins the two long-acting insulin biosimilar products approved in 2021 by the FDA. Approval of biosimilar products can increase patient access to safe and effective treatment options. The FDA also recently approved [Ctexli](#) (chenodiol) for the treatment of cerebrotendinous xanthomatosis (CTX) in adults. Ctexli is the first FDA-approved drug to treat CTX, a very rare lipid storage disease. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

CDC Data Shows 4 Percent Decline in U.S. Drug Overdose Mortality Rate

According to a new analysis from the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC), drug overdose deaths declined 4 percent from 2022 and 2023. Drug overdoses are a persistent health problem and a large contributor to unintentional injury, which is the fourth leading cause of death in the United States. A new CDC report describes changes in age-adjusted drug overdose death rates between 2022 and 2023 by state (and the District of Columbia) and selected type of drug. The age-adjusted U.S. drug overdose death rate declined from 32.6 per 100,000 in 2022 to 31.3 per 100,000 people in 2023. Read more [here](#).

Events

Register for the Third Annual VCU/RVA Aortic Symposium on March 1

The Third Annual VCU/RVA Aortic Symposium is scheduled for March 1 (7 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](#).

Regional Human Trafficking Summit in March has In-Person, Hybrid Registration Options

In-person and hybrid registration options are available for the upcoming Regional Human Trafficking Summit March 4-5 in Towson, MD. The multi-state non-profit **Regional Interdisciplinary Collaborative Working to Disrupt Human Trafficking** (The RIC) is hosting the Fifth Annual Regional Human Trafficking Summit at the Sheraton Baltimore North Hotel. The event brings together professionals and advocates from Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and Washington, D.C. for networking across diverse organizations and agencies, access to regional resources, as well as shared learning and collaboration in breakout sessions. This year, lived experience experts will be integrated into nearly every session. Visit this [link](#) for registration information.

Register for VNPC Sixth Annual Day of Learning Event on March 10

The **Virginia Neonatal Perinatal Collaborative** (VNPC) is hosting the Sixth Annual Day of Learning on March 10 in Chesterfield County on March 10. The theme for the event is “Breaking Down Barriers: Maternal and Infant Health” and it will feature expert speakers and focus on improving maternal and infant health outcomes through collaboration, communication, and evidence-based action. It offers participants an opportunity to connect with health care professionals, advocates, and community partners. Learn about registration and vendor opportunities through this [link](#).

Podcast

VHHA *Patients Come First* Podcast Features Heart, Kidney Transplant Survivor, Sentara Patient

This episode of VHHA’s *Patients Come First* podcast features **Tina Buck**, a double transplant patient who receives ongoing care from **Sentara Health**. She joins us to share her story as a 30-year heart transplant survivor, the experience of meeting the family of one of her organ donors, 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

Paula Brooks, DNP, MBA, FNP-BC, RNFA, FAPPex, has been named inaugural Associate Vice President of Advanced Practice Providers for **MCV Physicians**, the medical practice for **VCU Health**. Brooks most recently served as System Director of Advanced Practice Providers at Baystate Health in Springfield, Massachusetts. Brooks is an active member of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, the American Nurses Association, and Advanced Practice Provider Executives (APPex). She earned a bachelor of science degree in nursing, a master of science degree as a family nurse practitioner, and a doctor of nursing practice degree from the University of Massachusetts. Brooks also obtained a Registered Nurse First Assistant certification from Northeastern



University and completed a master's of business administration degree with a focus on Healthcare Administration. Read more [here](#).



VCU Massey Comprehensive Cancer Center and **VCU Health** have appointed **David Nalepinski**, MS, as the new Vice President of its Cancer Service Line (CSL). Nalepinski joins the CSL with more than 25 years of experience in oncology-focused health care, previously serving in leadership roles spanning two decades with The Innova Group (Healthcare Solutions Division), Duke Cancer Institute, Dartmouth Cancer Center, and the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. He is a Lean Six Sigma certified professional with a master's degree in health policy and clinical practice from the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth College and a bachelor's degree in sport business management from the University of Massachusetts. Read more [here](#).

Brenda Palmore, DHA, FACMPE, has been named Vice President of Operations at **VCU Health Community Memorial Hospital (CMH)**. Palmore joined CMH in 1998 and has more than two decades of health care leadership experience. She previously served as Vice President of Practice Management and Business Development. Palmore holds a doctorate in healthcare administration and leadership from the Medical University of South Carolina. Read more [here](#).

