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## FEATURED CONTENT

### [VHHA in Action](#)

### [News Updates](#)

- [State Health Commissioner Advises Clinicians About Potential Antibiotic Shortfall](#)
- [SAMHSA Mental Health, Drug Use Survey Finds Declines in Teen Suicidal Thoughts, Depression](#)
- [Joint Commission to Develop New Standards for Children's Hospital Accreditation](#)
- [U.S. Senate Confirms New CDC Director](#)
- [White House, CMS Announce 'Make Health Tech Great Again' Interoperability Initiative](#)

### [Events](#)

- [Register for Aug. 4 Webinar on 2026 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule Proposed Rule](#)
- [Register for 340B Roundtable Meeting on Aug. 14 in Charlotte, NC](#)
- [Register for Sept. 17 In-Person Workshop on Clinician Satisfaction, Patient Experience](#)
- [Nominations Being Accepted for 'Wonder Nurse' Award Named in Memory of VHHA Staffer](#)

### [Podcast](#)

- [VHHA Patients Come First Podcast Features VCU Health Kidney Transplant Surgical Leader](#)

### [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, these are some developments of interest to Virginia hospitals and health systems:

### **VHHA Holds Meeting of Workplace Violence Data Reporting Task Force**

- This week, VHHA hosted a meeting of the **Workplace Violence Data Reporting Task Force**. The group is an informational forum to support Virginia hospitals in complying with a new state law that requires regular workplace violence data reporting. The Task Force is also focused on identifying opportunities for statewide shared learning. A [state law](#) that took effect on July 1

requires hospitals to document health care workplace violence incidents and report them to the state. Questions about the Task Force and its work can be directed to Abraham Segres at [asegres@vhha.com](mailto:asegres@vhha.com).

## 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 [WWBT](#), [WSLS](#), the [Virginia Mercury](#), the [Henrico Citizen](#), [VA Dogwood](#), [Medical Buyer](#), the [News Virginian](#), [News Break](#), [Insurance News Net](#), the [Northern Virginia Daily](#), and [USSA News](#).

## News Updates

### State Health Commissioner Advises Clinicians About Potential Antibiotic Shortfall

In a recent [letter](#) to clinicians, **Virginia State Health Commissioner Dr. Karen Shelton** advised that a recall of certain Bicillin L-A (penicillin G benzathine) lots due to the presence of particulates in the syringes may lead to a near-term shortage of this antibiotic. Bicillin L-A is the only recommended treatment for pregnant women and babies with congenital syphilis. There are no emergency stockpiles of this medication from Pfizer subsidiary King Pharmaceuticals, and product is being [allocated on a case-by-case basis](#). While the manufacturer indicates that no adverse effects have been reported to date, and many of the lots may have already been distributed to providers and administered, the remaining affected doses should not be used. For recalled doses already administered to patients, providers should use their standard protocols to determine the approach for action. The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC) [is recommending](#) that health care providers prioritize the use of Bicillin L-A to treat pregnant women, infants, and neonates with congenital syphilis. The letter from Commissioner Shelton indicates that the VDH Central Pharmacy currently has adequate Bicillin L-A to treat all patients with syphilis.

### SAMHSA Mental Health, Drug Use Survey Finds Declines in Teen Suicidal Thoughts, Depression

The **U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration** (SAMHSA) recently shared findings from its most recent national survey on drug use and mental health. The survey found that the share of adolescents aged 12 to 17 who had serious suicidal thoughts declined from 12.9 percent in 2021 to 10.1 percent in 2024. It also found a decline (from 20.8 percent in 2021 to 15.4 percent in 2024), of adolescents who experienced a major depressive episode. Read more [here](#).

### Joint Commission to Develop New Standards for Children's Hospital Accreditation

This week, the **Joint Commission** announced a new children's health care strategy to address gaps in how children's hospitals are accredited and certified. This effort is described as a bold step forward in recognizing children's unique health care needs given that current standards do not distinguish between the respective health care needs of adults and children. An initial focus of this work will be adjusting accreditation and certification programs for dedicated children's hospitals and revising inapplicable standards to better suit those organizations. The Joint Commission has formed a Children's Healthcare Advisory Committee, a high-level council of world-class pediatric clinicians and child health care

executives to guide the development of new frameworks and explore how accreditation and certification can better serve the health care needs of children. Read more [here](#).

### **U.S. Senate Confirms New CDC Director**

This week, the U.S. Senate [voted](#) to confirm the nomination of **Susan Monarez**, PhD, as Director of the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC). Monarez, of Wisconsin, is a health scientist and longtime civil servant. She is the first CDC director to be confirmed by the Senate under a law passed in 2023, and the first to serve in the role without a medical degree [in more than 70](#) years, according to published reports.

### **White House, CMS Announce ‘Make Health Tech Great Again’ Interoperability Initiative**

This week, the **Trump Administration** announced an effort to establish a more secure and personalized health care experience by collaborating with private sector companies on interoperability efforts. Several prominent technology firms including **Amazon, Anthropic, Apple, Google, and OpenAI** pledged during a White House “Make Health Tech Great Again” event hosted with the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** (CMS) to help lay a foundation for a next-generation digital health ecosystem that will improve patient outcomes, reduce provider burden, and drive value. The initiative will focus on promoting a CMS Interoperability Framework to easily and seamlessly share information between patients and providers and increasing the availability of personalized tools so that patients have the information and resources they need to make better health decisions. Read more [here](#).

## **Events**

### **Register for Aug. 4 Webinar on 2026 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule Proposed Rule**

Registration is open for an Aug. 4 webinar hosted by [ChartSpan](#), a [VHHA Solutions](#) endorsed partner, that will provide an urgent overview of the recently released 2026 Medicare physician fee schedule (PFS) [proposed rule](#). The webinar will highlight key proposed changes, including increases to the conversion factor, the addition of behavioral health add-on codes to advanced primary care management, billing changes for rural health clinics and federally qualified health centers, and a range of other proposed policy updates. While the provisions of the proposed rule are not yet final, many are expected to be incorporated in the final rule. Visit this [link](#) to register for the webinar scheduled for 12:30 p.m. on Aug. 4.

### **Register for 340B Roundtable Meeting on Aug. 14 in Charlotte, NC**

This month, the **North Carolina Healthcare Association**, the **South Carolina Hospital Association**, and **VHHA Solutions** are hosting a Regional 340B Roundtable from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. on Aug. 14 at the AC Hotel Charlotte Ballantyne in Charlotte, NC. The event is designed to bring together hospitals from neighboring states for a day of learning and strategic discussion about the 340B Program. Program focus areas will include keys to success, state and federal policy updates, navigating manufacturer complexity, and more. Registration is free for VHHA member hospitals. Register through this [link](#).

### **Register for Sept. 17 In-Person Workshop on Clinician Satisfaction, Patient Experience**

Registration is open for an upcoming in-person workshop called “Beyond Burnout: Bridging Patient Experience and Clinician Engagement for Sustainable Healthcare Excellence.” The workshop is scheduled for Sept. 17 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at VHHA offices in Glen Allen, VA. It will be facilitated by **Stacy Palmer**, Senior Vice President and COO at **The Beryl Institute**. Event programming will focus on providing actionable insights on creating a culture that elevates patient and provider voices, mitigates burnout, and drives system-wide transformation. Register through this [link](#).

### Nominations Being Accepted for ‘Wonder Nurse’ Award Named in Memory of VHHA Staffer

The **Virginia Neonatal Perinatal Collaborative (VNPC)** is now accepting nominations for a series of awards recognizing outstanding nurses, hospital professionals, and community leaders that are scheduled to be presented at the Ninth Annual VNPC Summit on Oct. 19-20 in Roanoke, VA. The Joan Williamson Wonder Nurse Award is being presented in memory of **Joan Williamson**, RN, a past VHHA team member, and it honors “a nurse who goes above and beyond in patient care, teamwork, and community service.” To qualify, nominees must hold an active RN, BSN, or MSN license and be presently working in a nursing role or one that relies on nursing expertise. Nominations may be submitted through this [link](#) and are open until Oct. 17. Nominations are also being accepted for the Donald Dudley Awards – the [Bacon Award](#) and the [Iced Tea Award](#). Those awards are named in honor of **Dr. Donald Dudley**, a VNPC founder and champion for maternal and infant health who is known for his love of bacon and iced tea. The Bacon Award recognizes outstanding impact in a hospital setting and the Iced Tea Award celebrates contributions in a community setting.

## Podcast

### VHHA *Patients Come First* Podcast Features VCU Health Kidney Transplant Surgical Leader

This episode of VHHA’s *Patients Come First* podcast features **Dr. Muhammad “Irfan” Saeed**, Kidney Transplant Surgical Director at the **VCU Health Hume-Lee Transplant Center**, for a conversation about his work, National Minority Donor Awareness Month, the critical need for more living kidney 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](#), [Pocket Casts](#), the [Virginia Audio Collective](#), and the [World Podcast Network](#). The podcast can also be heard on the radio airwaves – episodes air Sundays at 9 a.m. on 100.5 FM, 107.7 FM, 92.7 FM, and 820 AM across Central Virginia and 1650 AM in Hampton Roads. Send questions, comments, feedback, or guest suggestions to [pcfpodcast@vhha.com](mailto:pcfpodcast@vhha.com).



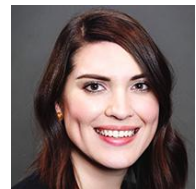
## Around the State



The **Ballad Health** Board of Directors elected **Duane Miller** to serve on its Board. The Board also elected **Kyle J. Cavanaugh** to the Audit and Compliance Committee. Miller currently serves as the executive director of the LENOWISCO Planning District Commission in Southwest Virginia. He has dedicated more than 30 years to community and economic development in Southwest Virginia. Miller

has served on a variety of boards across civic, academic, and service organizations, including service as Chair of the Frontier Health Board of Directors, President of the University of Virginia's College at Wise Alumni Board of Directors, a member of the Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority Board of Directors, Mountain Empire Community College Foundation, and many others. He will serve as Chair of the Governance Committee of the Board and will also serve on the Board's Strategy and Innovation Committee. Cavanaugh serves as President of the National Basketball Association (NBA), where he leads the global administration for the NBA, including risk management, internal audit, IT, security and regulatory compliance. He previously held leadership roles at Duke University, the University of Florida, the University of Texas at Austin, Rice University, and Vanderbilt University Medical Center, where he was responsible for major administrative and operational functions impacting tens of thousands of employees and students. Read more [here](#).

**Melanie Reza**, Associate General Counsel at **VHC Health**, has been selected as a member of the Leadership Center of Arlington's Lead Class of 2026. The Lead Class of 2026 includes leaders from business, government, and nonprofit sectors and will begin on Thursday, September 25, 2025. The Lead program deepens connections with a diverse network of established leaders and inspires them to transform and support their community. Read more [here](#).



**Clinch Valley Health** has named **Staci Rhudy**, PharmD, BCSCP, as its Director of Pharmacy. Dr. Rhudy brings nearly a decade of experience in the hospital setting to the role of leading pharmacy services at Clinch Valley Medical Center. She is a 2016 graduate of the Appalachian College of Pharmacy and earned her Board Certification in Sterile Compounding in 2024. Read more [here](#).

**Catherine Burke**, DNP, MBA, RN, CPHQ, Senior Director of Organizational Excellence and Data Analytics for **Valley Health**; and **Julie Dime**, Vice President of Government Relations for the **Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association** (VHHA); are among a group of 36 health care leaders selected by the **American Hospital Association** (AHA) **Center for Health Innovation** to join the Next Generation



Leaders Fellowship program. During the 12-month fellowship program, participants hone essential skills, such as leading and effecting change, navigating the health care environment, driving transformation, improving care delivery, and developing operational strategies for success. Read more [here](#).