

# FYI Weekly

HEALTH CARE NEWS FOR VIRGINIA'S HOSPITALS AND HEALTH SYSTEMS

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## FEATURED CONTENT

### [VHHA in Action](#)

### [News Updates](#)

- [White House Issues Guidance on 'Most Favored Nation' Drug Pricing, HHS Launches 340B Pilot](#)
- [HHS Plans to Halt Certain mRNA Vaccine Development Activities](#)
- [DMAS Seeking New Chief Medical Officer](#)
- [CDC Data Shows Youth Vaccination Rates Continue to Decline](#)
- [CMS Issues IPPS, SNF, LTC Final Rules](#)

### [Events](#)

- [VDH to Host Aug. 13 Webinar on Virginia Maternity Center Breastfeeding-Friendly Designation](#)
- [Registration is Open for VHHA 2025 Virginia Behavioral Health Summit on Sept. 25](#)
- [VHEMP to Host Aug. 21 Webinar on Healthcare Cybersecurity, Extended Downtime Assessments](#)
- [Carilion to Host Aug. 26 Webinar on Pregnant Patients with Substance Use Disorder](#)
- [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 Disability Advocate Living with Cerebral Palsy](#)

### [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 Hosts Meeting of Payor Advisory Committee**

- This week, VHHA held a meeting of the **Payor Advisory Committee**. 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](mailto:cconnors@vhha.com) to inquire about the committee.

### **VHHA Hosts In-Person Patient and Family Experience, HCAHPS Workshop**

- This week, the **VHHA Center for Healthcare Excellence** hosted an in-person Patient and Family Experience and HCAHPS Workshop for hospital team members. The session held at VHHA offices included a presentation on HCAHPS insights from a leader with **Press Ganey**, a briefing on patient complaint trends from the **Virginia Department of Health (VDH)**, information about **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)** structural measures, and presentations on safety culture and teamwork from representatives with **Bon Secours, Inova, and Sentara Leigh Hospital**.

## **News Updates**

### **White House Issues Guidance on ‘Most Favored Nation’ Drug Pricing, HHS Launches 340B Pilot**

In a recent letter, **U.S. President Donald J. Trump** outlined a series of steps for pharmaceutical manufacturers to take to reduce U.S. prescription drugs prices to a level consistent with the lowest price offered in other developed nations, which is known as the most-favored-nation (MFN) price. The steps direct drug manufacturers to provide MFN prices to all Medicaid patients, require manufacturers to stipulate they won't offer other developed nations better prices for new drugs than prices in the U.S., provide a mechanism for manufacturers to sell medicine directly to patients, and contemplate higher international prices to address price imbalances. The letter advises manufacturers that the federal government will bring its weight to bear if action isn't taken to address drug prices. Read more [here](#). In related news, the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)** recently [announced](#) a voluntary 340B Rebate Model Pilot Program available to qualifying drug manufacturers “to effectuate the 340B ceiling price on select drugs to all covered entities.” Sept. 15 is the application deadline for prospective participants. Approval decisions will be made by Oct. 15 for a Jan. 1, 2026 effective date. Manufacturers may not implement plans without receiving approval.

### **HHS Plans to Halt Certain mRNA Vaccine Development Activities**

The **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)** has [announced](#) plans for a coordinated wind-down of mRNA vaccine development activities under the **Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA)**. That includes cancelling and de-scoping various contracts and solicitations. The decision comes after a review of mRNA-related investments initiated during the COVID-19 public health emergency and it signals a broader shift in federal vaccine development priorities.

### **DMAS Seeking New Chief Medical Officer**

Virginia's Medicaid agency, the **Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS)**, is seeking a new Chief Medical Officer to serve as a key member of the agency's executive team and provide clinical leadership and management in support of the agency mission. This includes work focused on improving

patient and provider experiences, enhancing population health, and reducing health care costs. The CMO management responsibilities include leading the medical support and pharmacy teams and leading on the development and implementation of clinical policies, standards, and practices consistent with sound medical practice that affects members as well as the provider and advocacy communities. The CMO will also work closely with the Governor's Office, the Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, and leaders from other key agencies. Read more [here](#).

### **CDC Data Shows Youth Vaccination Rates Continue to Decline**

New data from the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC) shows that vaccination rates among kindergarten students during the 2024-2025 school year decreased relative to the prior year. The decrease was documented for all reported vaccines from the year before, ranging from 92.1 percent for diphtheria, tetanus, and acellular pertussis vaccine (DTaP) to 92.5 percent for measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine (MMR) and polio vaccine. During that school year, CDC also found that exemptions from one or more vaccines among U.S. kindergartners increased to 3.6 percent, compared to 3.3 percent the year before, and that exemptions increased in 36 states and Washington, D.C., with 17 states reporting exemptions exceeding 5 percent. Read more [here](#).

### **CMS Issues IPPS, SNF, LTC Final Rules**

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** (CMS) recently issued final rules regarding [inpatient prospective payment system](#) (IPPS) rates, [long-term care hospital](#) (LTC) payment rates, and the [skilled nursing facility](#) (SNF) prospective payment system for 2026. The IPPS rule increases rates by a net 2.6 percent for hospitals that are meaningful users of electronic health records and submit quality measure data. That rate update reflects a hospital market basket increase of 3.3 percent as well as a productivity cut of 0.7 percent. CMS has also finalized a 3 percent LTC payment update, which includes a 3.4 percent market basket update, reduced by a 0.7 percent productivity adjustment. The SNF final rule will increase aggregate payments by 3.2 percent, reflecting a 3.3 percent market basket update, a 0.7 percent cut for productivity, and a 0.6 percent increase for the market basket forecast error for fiscal year 2024.

## **Events**

### **VDH to Host Aug. 13 Webinar on Virginia Maternity Center Breastfeeding-Friendly Designation**

The **Virginia Department of Health** (VDH) is hosting a webinar from noon-1 p.m. on Aug. 13 regarding the Virginia Maternity Center Breastfeeding-Friendly Designation (VA MCBFD) Program. This webinar will unveil some important updates made to the application ahead of a Nov. 1 deadline. The Virginia Maternity Center Breastfeeding-Friendly Designation Program is a state designation based on Baby-Friendly USA's Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding. These steps help birthing facilities review and celebrate the actions they are taking to promote breastfeeding for families they serve. Visit this [link](#) to register for the webinar and contact **Fahimah Zaman** at [Fahimah.Zaman@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:Fahimah.Zaman@vdh.virginia.gov) with questions.

### **Registration is Open for VHHA 2025 Virginia Behavioral Health Summit on Sept. 25**

Registration is now open for the **2025 Virginia Behavioral Health Summit** scheduled for Sept. 25 as an in-person event at The Westin – Richmond. "Community: Building an Accessible System of Care Across

the Continuum” is the theme for the event that 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. The Summit programming lineup includes keynote remarks on compassionate behavioral health and addiction as well as sessions on emergency department innovations in behavioral health access, the role of AI in enhancing care, crisis services, autism care, primary care integration, employee engagement, and law enforcement community relationships. View the program agenda [here](#) and register through this [link](#).

### **VHEMP to Host Aug. 21 Webinar on Healthcare Cybersecurity, Extended Downtime Assessments**

Registration is open for an upcoming **Virginia Healthcare Emergency Management Program (VHEMP)** webinar that is being held to share results from the Healthcare Cybersecurity Assessment and Extended Downtime Healthcare Delivery Assessment that were conducted in May and June of 2025. The pre-recorded webinar session will be broadcast at noon on Aug. 21. Register for the webinar through this [link](#). Registrants will receive an e-mail link to join the session once registration has been approved. Following the webinar, participants will receive a link to the recording for future viewing as well as a copy of supporting documents. Any comments or questions submitted in the chat panel during the webinar will be responded to within 24 hours after the event. Event questions may be directed to [preparedness@vhha.com](mailto:preparedness@vhha.com).

### **Carilion to Host Aug. 26 Webinar on Pregnant Patients with Substance Use Disorder**

Clinical leaders from **Carilion Clinic** will lead an upcoming webinar on the topic of “Fentanyl, the Fetus, and the Front Line: Bridging the Gap to Recovery for Pregnant Patients with Substance Use Disorders in the ED.” The one-hour webinar is scheduled for noon on Aug. 26 and will feature **Dr. Arthur Ollendorff**, **Dr. Kimberly Simcox**, and **Dr. Madeleine McSpadden** from Carilion. This webinar is the latest in a series that is part of a statewide effort to expand emergency room adoption of best practices in the treatment of addiction across Virginia and to continue to further progress toward getting patients the evidence-based treatment that they need starting in hospital emergency rooms. The webinar qualifies as CME-based addiction treatment training that can count towards eight hours of DEA-required education when a physician or ACP renews DEA registration. There is no cost to attend, but pre-registration is required. The session is being offered via Teams webinar. Register through this [link](#). Registrants will receive a unique invitation link that should not be shared.

### **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 Disability Advocate Living with Cerebral Palsy**

This episode of VHHA’s *Patients Come First* podcast features **Michael Lewis**, Vice President of Policy for the **American Association of People with Disabilities**, for a conversation about his work and personal experience with cerebral palsy, the history of the Americans With Disabilities Act, Disability Pride Month, 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](#), [Tuneln](#), [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



**Pam Austin**, Chief Information Officer for the **Ballad Health** information technology team, has been recognized as a top information technology leader by the Tennessee ORBIE® Awards. Austin is one of eight CIOs awarded as a Tennessee CIO of the Year for 2025. Hundreds of CIOs across the state are considered for the prestigious recognition every year, which showcases the excellence in leadership, innovation and vision of top technology executives across the state.

**Melissa Poretz Riddy**, Director of Government and Community Relations and Strategic Communications for the **Inova** East Region has been named to The Zebra's 2025 40 Under 40 Alexandria Honorees list. Read more [here](#).



The emergency departments at **Bon Secours Mary Immaculate Hospital**, **Inova Fairfax Hospital**, **Riverside Doctors' Hospital Williamsburg**, and **Sentara Princess Anne Hospital** have been recognized by the Emergency Nurses Association with Lantern Awards for demonstrating outstanding leadership, practice, education, and advocacy that resulted in improved patient care and staff well-being. Read more [here](#).