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

VHHA Hosts Meeting of Executive Committee, Board of Directors, Reception with Governor

- This week, the **Executive Committee** of the **VHHA Board of Directors** met for a discussion about issues of interest and importance to hospitals and health systems, including operational considerations as well as state and federal policy issues. The Board of Directors also separately convened for an in-person meeting at VHHA offices in Glen Allen, VA. Following the meeting,

Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin, First Lady Suzanne Youngkin, and members of the Governor's Health and Human Resources leadership team participated in a reception at VHHA in recognition of the health care policy accomplishments of the past four years including the [Right Help, Right Now](#) initiative that has made transformational investments in strengthening the behavioral health system.

VHHA Hosts Workforce Steering Committee Meeting

- This week, VHHA hosted a meeting of the **Workforce Steering Committee** that focuses on health care workforce development, recruiting, and retention strategies. Topics covered during the meeting included a legislative update ahead of the 2026 **Virginia General Assembly** session, a discussion of workforce development models and current initiatives, licensing and scope of practice updates, a provider well-being initiative update, and information about the federal Rural Health Transformation Program grant process. Contact **Sharon Alexander** at salexander@vhha.com for more information about the Committee.

VHHA Shares Video from 2025 Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Leaders Summit

- This week, VHHA released a [highlight video](#) that recaps sights and sounds from the **2025 Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Leaders Summit** held Nov. 5-7, 2025 at the Omni Homestead Resort in Hot Springs, VA. "Insight. Innovation. Impact." was the theme of the Summit presented by the **Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association (VHHA)** and the **VHHA Foundation**. View a Summit program brochure [here](#). View the awards luncheon program [here](#) and read more about the VHHA Outstanding Service Awards, including past winners, through this [link](#). Read more about the event [here](#) and view a Summit photo gallery 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 [WHRO](#).

News Updates

CDC Advisory Panel Recommends Individual Choice on Hepatitis B Vaccine for Infants

The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)** [recently voted to recommend](#) "individual-based decision-making" as parents evaluate whether to have a hepatitis B vaccine dose administered to infants born to women who test negative for the virus. For infants with parents who opt not to accept the birth dose, ACIP recommends that the initial dose be administered no earlier than two months of age. ACIP did not update CDC recommendations regarding vaccination for infants born to women who test positive for the virus or those with an unknown virus status. In a separate [statement](#), the **American Academy of Pediatrics** said the decision will "harm children," adding that it "continues to recommend giving newborns a dose of hepatitis B vaccine within 24 hours of birth with additional doses at 1-2 months and 6-18 months."

Federal Medicare Payment Advisory Commission Shares 2027 Rate Recommendations

Discussion of draft Medicare payment rate updates for 2027 were a topic of discussion during a [recent meeting](#) of the federal **Medicare Payment Advisory Commission** (MedPAC). The draft recommendations call on Congress to update Medicare rates for hospital inpatient and outpatient services and transition to a safety-net index policy to distribute an additional \$1 billion to safety-net hospitals. The recommendations further urge Congress to update 2027 Medicare base payments for physicians and other health professional services, and to reduce the 2027 payment rate for inpatient rehabilitation facilities, home health agencies, and skilled nursing facilities. A vote on the recommendations is expected in January.

CMS Provides Guidance to States on Community Engagement, Work Rules for Adults on Medicaid

This week, the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** (CMS) shared [guidance](#) with states regarding new community engagement and work standards for adult Medicaid participants established under the budget reconciliation legislation approved earlier this year. Under the provisions of the law, able bodied adults on Medicaid will be required to work, be in school, or provide community service totaling at least 80 hours a month as a condition of program participation. Medicaid enrollees must also meet income guidelines, among other eligibility standards. States are directed to implement the community engagement requirements by Jan. 1, 2027. Read more [here](#).

HHS Modifies Nursing Home Minimum Staffing Standard Rule

The **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** (HHS) recently [announced](#) the repeal of certain provisions of a federal rule on Minimum Staffing Standards for Long-Term Care Facilities. A [2024 rule](#) from the Biden Administration established a requirement that nursing homes participating in Medicare and Medicaid provide residents with a minimum total of 3.48 hours of nursing care per day. That included at least 0.55 hours from a registered nurse per resident per day, 2.45 hours from a nurse aide per resident per day, and requirements that each facility have a registered nurse onsite round-the-clock. The Trump Administration is repealing those provisions on the grounds that they “disproportionately burdened facilities, especially those serving rural and Tribal communities, and jeopardized patient’s access to care.”

Right to Work Repeal Legislation Pre-Filed Ahead of 2026 Virginia General Assembly Session

State **Senator Jennifer Carroll Foy** (D-Prince William County) has pre-filed [legislation](#) seeking to repeal Virginia’s longstanding [right to work law](#) that prohibits compulsory union membership as a condition of employment. The legislation, Senate Bill 32, has been [referred](#) to the **Senate Commerce and Labor Committee** and will be pending there when the 2026 **Virginia General Assembly** session commences on Jan. 14. Repealing Virginia’s right to work law has long been a goal for organized labor groups. It is opposed by business groups, including the [Keep Virginia Working](#) coalition that is encouraging Virginians to contact state lawmakers to express opposition to the legislation on the grounds that repeal would harm individual freedom and undermine economic competitiveness in the Commonwealth. During the 2025 gubernatorial campaign, **Governor-elect Abigail Spanberger** [reportedly said](#) she did not support full repeal of the right to work law, while indicating that reforms to that policy may be appropriate in the future.

Events

VHEMP to Host Dec. 17 Webinar with National Weather Service on Anticipated Winter Conditions

Registration is open for a **Virginia Healthcare Emergency Management Program (VHEMP)** winter weather briefing webinar with the **National Weather Service (NWS)** scheduled for Dec. 17 at noon. VHEMP is a partnership between the **Virginia Department of Health (VDH)**, the **Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association (VHHA)** and the four Regional Healthcare Coalitions. The webinar will feature **Katie Carter**, Emergency Response Specialist with NWS, who will provide an overview of the upcoming winter weather season forecast from mid-December through March as well as resources available to prepare for and monitor events. Visit this [link](#) to register. After registration, attendees will receive a confirmation e-mail containing information about joining the webinar. An attendee guide can be viewed [here](#) and information about asking questions during the webinar is available through this [link](#).

Save the Date: 2026 Virginia Patient Safety Summit

Save the date for the **2026 Virginia Patient Safety Summit**, which will be held as a virtual event on Feb. 26, 2026. The Summit will highlight innovative work in Virginia and across the nation to advance a culture of safety and continuous improvement in health care with a focus on how shared values and behaviors can minimize errors, improve outcomes, and enhance the overall quality and experience of care. Beginning in 2026, the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)** will require all U.S. hospitals participating in Medicare or Medicaid to attest to patient safety structural measures that assess strategies to strengthen systems for safety, including leadership commitment to eliminating preventable harm, supporting a culture of safety and learning health systems, accountability and transparency, and patient and family engagement. Registration for the Summit will open next week. The **VHHA Center for Healthcare Excellence** is hosting this event in partnership with the **Virginia Nurses Foundation**, the **Medical Society of Virginia**, the **Virginia Pharmacists Association**, and the **Virginia Society of Health-System Pharmacists**.

Podcast

VHHA *Patients Come First* Podcast Features VCU Medical Student, High-Flying Trapeze Artist

This episode of VHHA's *Patients Come First* podcast features **Tucker Smith**, a future physician and student at the **VCU School of Medicine** who moonlights as a high-flying acrobat with **Cirque du Soleil**, an international company of modern circus performers who delight and dazzle. Our conversation covers Tucker's unique path to medicine as well as aerial acrobatics and much 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.

Around the State



Dr. Elizabeth Ann Molloy Wells, MD, MHS, has been appointed to the role of Chief Clinical Officer and Physician-In-Chief for **Children's National Hospital**. Dr. Wells brings deep clinical expertise and a longstanding commitment to advancing care for children and families. In her previous role as senior vice president of the Neuroscience and Behavioral Medicine Center, Dr. Wells has grown programmatic and research impact across quality and safety, multidisciplinary destination programs and patient experience across the care continuum, making her uniquely prepared for this new opportunity. She completed her pediatrics and neurology training at Children's National and has served as a pediatric neurologist within the Brain Tumor Institute and the Division of Neurology, rising to the rank of professor in Pediatrics, Neurology and Rehabilitation Medicine. Dr. Wells succeeds Dr. David Wessel, MD, who will retire at the end of the year after an extraordinary 20 years at Children's National. Read more [here](#).

Children's National Hospital recently announced **Cicely "CC" Brooks, DNP-ENL, MSN, RN, NE-BC, FAB**, as its new Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer, effective Jan. 12, 2026. Brooks comes from Wolfson Children's Hospital in Jacksonville, FL, where she served as vice president of Patient Care Services and chief nurse executive. She brings more than 25 years of progressive leadership experience across inpatient, outpatient and specialty services in both pediatric and adult care, including oversight of nursing, pharmacy and behavioral health services. Brooks earned her bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of North Florida, her master's degree in nursing administration from Jacksonville University, and her doctorate in executive nurse leadership from Baylor University. She is a board-certified nurse executive and a fellow of the Advisory Board. Brooks steps into the role following Linda Talley, MS, RN, NE-BC, FAAN, who will retire after a distinguished 37-year tenure at Children's National at the end of the year. Read more [here](#).



Dr. Anthony Sandler, MD, Senior Vice President and Surgeon-In-Chief of the **Joseph E. Robert, Jr. Center for Surgical Care** at **Children's National Hospital**, has been awarded the title of honorary fellow from the Royal College of Surgeons of England. The RCS England is one of the world's oldest and most prestigious training institutions for aspiring surgeons. The RCS England honorary fellowship is offered by special invitation to people whose extraordinary achievements have made a profound and lasting impact on the fields of surgery or medicine on an international level. Read more [here](#).