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FEATURED CONTENT

[VHHA in Action](#)

[News Updates](#)

- [Governor-Elect Spanberger Selects Biden Administration Veteran for Labor Secretary](#)
- [CMS Announces Rural Health Funding Awards, Establishes Compliance Office to Monitor States](#)
- [HHS Seeking Public Comment on Accelerating Adoption of AI in Clinical Care](#)
- [Federal Agencies Seek Public Comment on Insurance Transparency Proposed Rule Changes](#)
- [DEA, HHS Extend COVID-19 Telehealth Prescribing Flexibilities for Another Year](#)
- [VDH Accepting Public Comments on Update to Regulations for Durable Do Not Resuscitate Orders](#)

[Events](#)

- [Save the Date for the 2026 Virginia Patient Safety Summit in February](#)

[Podcast](#)

- [VHHA Patients Come First Podcast Features Longtime Sentara Health Mechanic and Holiday Muralist](#)

[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:

VHEMP Hosts Webinar with National Weather Service on Anticipated Winter Conditions

- The **Virginia Healthcare Emergency Management Program (VHEMP)** recently hosted a winter weather briefing webinar with the **National Weather Service (NWS)**. 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 featured **Katie**

Carter, Emergency Response Specialist with NWS, who provided 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. View a webinar recording [here](#) and presentation slides through this [link](#).

VHHA Shares 2025 Holiday Video Card with Members

- The holiday season is a time to be thankful for our blessings. Here at VHHA, we are grateful for the dedicated caregivers and health care professionals who work in hospitals across Virginia to help keep people healthy. To mark the season, VHHA recently shared its 2025 holiday video card to wish everyone a safe, happy, and healthy holiday season and a prosperous New Year. View the 2025 holiday video card [here](#).

VHHA Shares Video from 2025 Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Leaders Summit

- VHHA recently 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 the [Augusta Free Press](#), [WINA](#), [WVIR](#), [Virginia Business](#), and [WVVA](#).

News Updates

Governor-Elect Spanberger Selects Biden Administration Veteran for Labor Secretary

Virginia Governor-Elect Abigail Spanberger has nominated **Jessica K. Looman** to serve as her Labor Secretary. Looman served as Administrator of the U.S. Department of Labor’s Wage and Hour Division, leading the federal labor standards enforcement agency from 2021 to 2025. Other previous roles include serving as Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Commerce, overseeing energy, insurance, and financial institution regulation, and as Deputy Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry. She has served as a Senior Fellow with the NYU Wagner Labor Initiative – focused on developing best practices and supporting state and local governments in protecting workers’ rights, providing guidance on strategic enforcement, child labor, proactive compliance efforts, and building interstate collaboration among enforcement agencies – and as Executive Director of the Minnesota State Building and Construction Trades Council. She is a 30-year member of the Laborers’ International Union of North America (LIUNA).

CMS Announces Rural Health Funding Awards, Establishes Compliance Office to Monitor States

This week, the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)** [announced](#) state funding awards associated with the federal [Rural Health Transformation Program](#), which was created under H.R. 1, the budget reconciliation legislation known as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA). The program is seeded with \$50 billion in funding that will be disbursed to states in \$10 billion annual increments from fiscal year 2026 through fiscal year 2030. According to the announcement, Virginia has been awarded \$189,544,888 for fiscal year 2026. States were required to apply for program funding – under the law, half of the program funds are distributed equally among approved states, and the other half are competitively allocated by CMS. VHHA worked with member hospitals and health systems to identify innovative proposals that align with the principles of the Rural Health Transformation Program. The Association also collaborated with the Administration of **Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin** as part of the state [application](#) submission process. In related news, CMS also recently [announced](#) the creation of the Office of Rural Health Transformation. The office will oversee management of the Rural Health Transformation Program and will provide policy and operational guidance to states and stakeholders. The office will also monitor states' implementation of the program's initiatives to ensure compliance.

HHS Seeking Public Comment on Accelerating Adoption of AI in Clinical Care

The **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)** has issued a request for information to seek broad public comment on what the agency can do to accelerate the adoption and use of AI as part of clinical care. Feb. 23, 2026 is the deadline for submitting public comments. Read more [here](#).

Federal Agencies Seek Public Comment on Insurance Transparency Proposed Rule Changes

The U.S. Departments of Treasury, Labor, and Health and Human Services have proposed changes to the Transparency in Coverage requirements for insurers related to machine-readable files consistent with a previous executive order and guidance materials. Feb. 23, 2026 is the deadline for submitting public comments. Read more [here](#).

DEA, HHS Extend COVID-19 Telehealth Prescribing Flexibilities for Another Year

The **U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)** and the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)** recently announced another extension on telemedicine flexibilities for prescribing controlled medications through Dec. 31, 2026. It is the fourth such extension of COVID-19 telemedicine flexibilities. It is intended to allow DEA-registered practitioners to continue prescribing schedule II-V controlled substances without requiring an in-person medical evaluation if certain conditions are met. Those conditions include prescriptions that are issued for a legitimate medical purpose and that a prescription is issued by a provider authorized to prescribe the class of controlled substance. The intent of the extension is to prevent disruptions of care, prevent a backlog of patients who need in-person appointments, and allow adequate time for potential, future implementation of in-person medical evaluation requirements. Read more [here](#).

VDH Accepting Public Comments on Update to Regulations for Durable Do Not Resuscitate Orders

The **Virginia Department of Health (VDH)** is accepting public comments through Jan. 28, 2026 on proposed changes to state regulations pertaining to Durable Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Orders. The regulatory action is being taken to ensure regulatory compliance with state law and conformity with the Virginia Administrative Code. The proposed changes are deemed non-controversial and are focused on

updating the “clarity and consistency of the regulation” to “help ensure that health care personnel, emergency medical services providers, and residents of the Commonwealth can effectively access and understand the regulation governing DNRs.” Feb. 12, 2026 is the scheduled effective date of the updated regulations. Read more [here](#). Questions may be directed to **Mohamed G. Abbamin**, MPA, Senior Policy Analyst, Office of Emergency Services, Virginia Department of Health, at (804) 980-6984, or mohamed.abbamin@vdh.virginia.gov.

Events

Save the Date for the 2026 Virginia Patient Safety Summit in February

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 in health systems, accountability and transparency, and patient and family engagement. Registration for the Summit will open soon. 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 Longtime Sentara Health Mechanic and Holiday Muralist

This episode of VHHA’s *Patients Come First* podcast features **Anthony White**, a hospital mechanic at **Sentara Virginia Beach General Hospital**. In addition to his day job, White is also known for the colorful holiday murals he creates to brighten the halls and lift the spirits of patients and staff. This conversation covers his career, artistry, the impact of his work on the hospital community, 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.

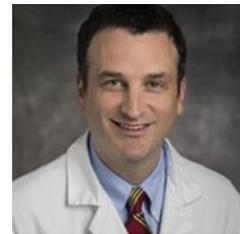


Around the State



Sonney Sapra, MBA, who has nearly 15 years of experience in health system information technology leadership, has been named **UVA Health's** Chief Information Officer. Sapra will provide strategic direction and operational guidance for the information and digital systems that support UVA Health's missions of patient care, research and education. He will begin his new role at UVA Health on Jan. 26. Sapra comes to UVA Health from Samaritan Health Services and Health Plan, where he has served since 2021 as senior vice president and chief digital and information officer for the Oregon-based health system that cares for 290,000 patients annually. He previously served as senior vice president and chief information officer at University of Louisville Health from 2018 to 2021 and as chief information officer for Oregon Health Sciences University – Hillsboro Medical Center from 2010 to 2017. Sapra earned his Certified Healthcare Chief Information Officer certificate from the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives. He also holds a bachelor's degree in audio engineering from Middlesex University in London and a master's degree in business administration from the University of Oregon. He has been named to Becker's Hospital Review's Chief Information Officers to Know list in 2024 and 2025.

Children's National Hospital has named **Dr. Steven L. Shein**, MD, FCCM, as chief of the Division of Critical Care Medicine. Dr. Shein joins Children's National from Rainbow Babies and Children's Hospital, where he served as chief of Pediatric Critical Care Medicine and held the Linsalata Family Distinguished Chair in Pediatric Critical Care and Emergency Medicine. Dr. Shein has authored more than 120 peer-reviewed manuscripts and numerous book chapters. He co-founded BACON (Bronchiolitis: Advancing Care and Outcomes Network), the bronchiolitis research subgroup of PALISI — the world's largest PICU research consortium. His contributions have earned him recognition as a fellow of the American College of Critical Care Medicine, designation as a University Hospitals Distinguished Physician and multiple Presidential Citations from the Society of Critical Care Medicine. Read more [here](#).



Dr. Lillian Su, MD, has joined **Children's National Hospital** as Chief of Cardiac Critical Care. She is the current president of the Pediatric Cardiac Intensive Care Society (PCICS) and returns to Children's National where she was an attending cardiac critical care medicine physician from 2008 to 2016 and medical director of the Board of Visitors Simulation program. Most recently, she was medical director of the Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit (CVICU) at Phoenix Children's Hospital. Dr. Su is board certified in pediatrics and pediatric critical care. She completed fellowships in pediatric critical care medicine at Children's Hospital Pittsburgh and cardiac critical care medicine at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Dr. Su attended medical school at Temple University in Philadelphia and completed residency and internship at Cedars Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles. Read more [here](#).

Chesapeake Regional Healthcare nurse practitioner **Talia Wallace**, DNP, FNP-C, recently earned her doctorate degree from the University of Alabama. Wallace has more than 20 years of healthcare experience. She earned her Master of Science degree as a Family Nurse Practitioner from Georgetown University and her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from Adventist University of Health Sciences. Wallace brings a wealth of knowledge as a nurse practitioner, having worked in orthopedics, pain and spine, and ambulatory care settings in Virginia and Maryland.

