



FYI Weekly

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

Virginia General Assembly Approaches its Halftime Deadline, Budget Bills Forthcoming

- Halftime is approaching at the 2026 **Virginia General Assembly** session. "Crossover Day" in the legislature is the annual deadline for bills to clear their chamber of origin to remain alive for further consideration during that year's session. This year, the deadline is Tuesday, Feb. 17. Bills that fail to advance by then are no longer viable for the current cycle. With the deadline nearing, the fate of several bills of interest to hospitals and health systems is becoming clearer. [House Bill 1201](#) to create a certificate of public need (COPN) exception for independent outpatient or ambulatory surgery centers was tabled by a **House of Delegates** subcommittee. Legislation ([House Bill 606](#)) to update state law related to medical facility reporting on the value of charity care recently won approval by the full **House of Delegates** and is now awaiting consideration in the **Virginia Senate**. [House Bill 829](#) to establish a new state level hospital price transparency and dispute resolution system did not advance out of a House subcommittee. An amended version of legislation to prohibit non-compete contracts that apply to healthcare professionals ([Senate Bill 128](#)) cleared the **Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee** this week. In its current form, the bill is prospective and would not apply to non-compete contracts that were agreed to prior to July 1, 2026. Similar legislation ([House Bill 627](#)) has passed the House of Delegates. It differs from the Senate version in several ways, including a provision that would exempt contracts involving employees whose earnings exceed a certain threshold. An amended version of [Senate Bill 278](#) to undertake a study of standards on drug companies participating in the federal 340B drug discount pricing program and related transparency requirements cleared the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee this week. In another development, the full Senate approved legislation ([Senate Bill 536](#)) related to medical malpractice damage awards that would amend the law so current statutory caps don't include interest accrued prior to a jury verdict or judge's order. Legislation that would have created an exception to the medical malpractice damages cap for patients under 10 years of age was continued to 2027 in the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee and will not advance this year. In all, more than 2,700 bills and resolutions have been filed for consideration during this year's 60-day session. The number of bills left standing after next Tuesday will be significantly reduced. While legislative action continues after crossover, some attention will shift to the state budget. Next Sunday, the House and Senate will each present their budget bills. They will be contrasting blueprints for state spending over the next two years. Out of those two versions, one compromise bill will be negotiated before the session concludes. The reconciled budget bill, along with other legislation approved by both chambers, will then be sent to the Governor for consideration. Throughout the process, the **VHHA Government Affairs Team** continues to monitor and engage on proposed bills and budget amendments in support of hospitals and health systems.

VHHA Hosts Meeting of Board of Directors' Executive Committee

- 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, state and federal policy issues, and the 2026 **Virginia General Assembly** session.

VHHA Analysis: Hospital Emergency Department Visits Rise for Cannabis-Induced Abdominal Distress

- This week, VHHA shared new analyses by the **VHHA Data Analytics Team** showing that annual adult patient visits to Virginia hospital emergency departments for cases of cannabis abuse, dependence, and poisoning diagnoses increased during the period from 2020-2024, as did adult emergency department visits associated with cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome (CHS). Over that five-year period, Virginia hospital emergency department visits among adult patients for cases of CHS – a condition whose symptoms can cause recurring episodes of severe nausea, abdominal pain, and vomiting among certain individuals who are long time cannabis users – increased nearly 29 percent. There were 24,960 total visits associated with CHS; annual visits rose from 4,027 in 2020 to 5,175 in 2024. Zooming out, Virginia hospital emergency departments had 172,778 adult patient visits for cannabis abuse, dependence, or poisoning diagnoses from 2020-2024, with more than 31,000 such hospital emergency department visits each year over that period. The annual peak was 37,690 in 2022. Beyond Virginia, [several academic research studies](#) from recent years have likewise observed a rise in CHS cases resulting in hospital visits.

View Highlight Video from VHHA Centennial Celebration Event in Richmond

- VHHA recently shared a [highlight video](#) recapping the Jan. 28 Centennial Celebration event it hosted in Richmond that featured **Virginia Lieutenant Governor Ghazala Hashmi, Virginia General Assembly** members, state officials, hospital and health system executives, and other stakeholders. This year, VHHA is celebrating its milestone 100th anniversary (1926-2026) with a series of events. The Association also debuted a new logo and colors that can be viewed [here](#). View a photo gallery of images from the Centennial Celebration event [here](#) and read more [here](#).

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 [WRIC](#), [WINA](#), [WAVY](#), [WVEC](#), [Virginia Lawyers Weekly](#), [Yahoo News](#), [News Nation](#), [WHTM](#), [WWVW](#), and [Mother Jones](#).

News Updates

VDH Reports Six 2026 Measles Cases as South Carolina Outbreak Count Climbs

The **Virginia Department of Health** (VDH) has [confirmed](#) six measles cases in the Commonwealth so far this year, a number that already surpasses the total for 2025. Most of those cases have been in Northern Virginia. Meanwhile, the **South Carolina Department of Public Health** [announced](#) this week that its measles outbreak has reached 933 cases. Nationwide, the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC) [reports](#) there have been 773 confirmed measles cases as of Feb. 5. For all of 2025, there were 2,276 confirmed measles cases reported in the United States, which is said to be the highest annual figure in recent decades. Measles is a viral infection that can be spread by respiratory means. Symptoms can include fever and a rash that starts on the face at the hairline and spreads to the neck, torso, arms, legs, and feet. A cough, runny nose, or red, itchy eyes might also be present. Symptoms often begin 7–14 days after exposure. Measles is a serious illness that can cause complications that lead to

hospitalization or even death. Immunization is available as a defense against the measles: the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine or the measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella (MMRV) vaccine series.

White House Launches Trump Rx Website to Promote Consumer Access to Reduced Price Drugs

The **White House** recently announced the launch of [Trump Rx](#), a website focused on helping Americans access some popular prescription medications at discounted prices. The website is part of a broader push by **U.S. President Donald J. Trump** to deliver most-favored-nation (MFN) drug pricing for Americans. In recent months, the Trump Administration has [announced](#) agreements with several “major pharmaceutical companies to lower prescription drug prices for Americans.” The recent launch of the Trump Rx site is a continuation of that work.

CMS Proposes Updating Regulations on ACA Health Insurance Plan Offerings

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** (CMS) recently [announced](#) proposed regulations to rescind certain limitations on the type of health insurance plans that can be offered through Affordable Care Act (ACA) marketplaces. The regulations would withdraw previous restrictions on plan types and allow insurers to offer short-term catastrophic plans as well as low-deductible plans with higher maximum out-of-pocket limits, among other changes to plan design rules. A fact sheet about the Notice of Benefit and Payment Parameters proposal for plan year 2027 can be read [here](#).

HHS Halts Pursuit of 340B Rebate Pilot Program Model After Adverse Court Decisions

The **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** (HHS) recently indicated that it is pulling back on plans to implement a proposed 340B Rebate Model Pilot Program. The move comes following a federal legal challenge and subsequent judicial decisions that did not favor the government’s position. Published [reporting](#) indicates that the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** (HHS) in a recent federal court filing acknowledged that it would not pursue the case further at this time. HHS retains the option to pursue the rebate pilot program in the future but would need to restart the regulatory process to proceed.

Organizations Appeal for Blood Donations Amid Supply Shortages

Several leading blood donation and storage organizations are asking the public to make appointments to donate blood amid a national supply shortage. A [joint statement](#) to that effect has been issued by the **Association for the Advancement of Blood & Biotherapies** (AABB), **America’s Blood Centers**, and the **American Red Cross**. Blood donations help save lives. Visit [AABB](#), [America’s Blood Centers](#), or the [American Red Cross](#) online to schedule an appointment to donate.

CMS Offers Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organization Program Opportunity

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** (CMS) offers healthcare organizations a no-cost opportunity to enhance care quality for Medicare beneficiaries through the **CMS Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organization** (QIN-QIO) program. QIN-QIO is the nation’s largest federal healthcare quality improvement initiative that partners with thousands of hospitals, nursing homes, physician practices, and patient advocates to improve care quality, patient safety, and health outcomes. Program participants receive direct technical assistance and advanced data analytics, tailored, evidence-

based intervention recommendations, customized training, and access to quality improvement tools. Visit this [link](#) for more information.

Events

Register for the 2026 Virginia Patient Safety Summit on February 26

Register now for the **2026 Virginia Patient Safety Summit**, which will be held as a free 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 healthcare 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. Register through this [link](#). The **VHHA Center for Healthcare Excellence** is hosting this event in partnership with the **Virginia Nurses Association** and 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 Health Pharmacy Leader, Professor, Podcaster

This episode of VHHA's *Patients Come First* podcast features **Dave Dixon**, PharmD, Chair of Pharmacotherapy and Outcomes Science and a Professor at the **VCU School of Pharmacy**. He joins us for a conversation about his professional path, the work of the Center for Pharmacy Practice Innovation, the recent launch of the Voices in Pharmacy Innovation Podcast, 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.



Around the State





Price



Sintich



Strider



Virts

Several Virginia hospital nursing leaders have been named to the [list](#) of 274 hospital and health system CNOs to know by *Becker's Hospital Review*. They include: **Kathy Baker**, PhD, RN, Chief Nursing Officer at **UVA Health**; **Alquietta Brown**, PhD, BSN, RN, Vice President of Nursing for **Inova Neuroscience** and **Inova Behavioral Health Services** and Chief Nurse Executive for **Inova Mount Vernon Hospital**; **Melody Dickerson**, DNP, RN, Chief Nursing Officer and Senior Vice President of Hospital Operations for **VHC Health**; **Michelle Franklin**, RN, Chief Nursing Officer for **Carilion Clinic**; **Amber Price**, DNP, RN, Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer at **Sentara Health**; **Maureen Sintich**, DNP, RN, Executive Vice President and Chief Nurse Executive at **Inova**; **Michelle Strider**, BSN, RN, Chief Nursing Officer for **UVA Community Health**; and **Ashley M. Virts**, MSN, RN, Chief Nursing Officer at **Inova Fairfax Medical Campus** and Vice President of Nursing for the Women's and Pediatric Service Lines.



Valley Health recently announced that cardiothoracic surgeon **Dr. Lindsey M. Prescher**, DO, will lead the health system's Cardiovascular Surgery team as its new Medical Director. A board-certified cardiothoracic surgeon, Dr. Prescher is a retired Commander in the **United States Navy** and former Chief of Cardiothoracic Surgery at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. She completed her Cardiothoracic Surgery Fellowship at the Yale University School of Medicine, followed by an additional year of advanced training as a Fellow in Structural Heart Disease at Yale.

Ballad Health recently announced **Mike Anderes**, FACHE, as managing director of **Ballad Ventures**. Anderes brings 30 years of experience in healthcare innovation, digital transformation, and system strategy to support Ballad Health's mission to improve health in the Appalachian Highlands. Anderes joins Ballad Health from Vale Health, a national consortium of 16 leading health systems he co-founded and led as president. Previously, Anderes served as chief digital officer for Froedtert Health in Milwaukee, WI and as president of Inception Health. Anderes is a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives (FACHE). He earned a masters in business administration from the University of Arizona and a bachelor's degree in physical therapy from the University of Connecticut. Read more [here](#).





Danielle O'Leary, MSN, RN, has been named Director of Nursing, Invasive Cardiology, Cath Lab, Electrophysiology, VIR at **Carilion Clinic**. She previously worked as Director of Cardiovascular Clinical Operations at North Memorial Health. She earned her bachelor of science in nursing degree at Adelphi University and her master of science in nursing administration degree at Stony Brook University.