



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:

Contact Your Legislator: Ask Them to Oppose Senate Bill 536 and Protect Access to Care

- The **Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association (VHHA)** is asking hospital team members and healthcare stakeholders to [contact their legislators](#) and urge them to oppose [Senate Bill 536](#) to protect patient access to care and provider sustainability. That legislation proposes sweeping changes to Virginia's medical malpractice system. The bill would more than double the malpractice cap to \$6 million by 2027 and extend liability exposure through broader discovery rules, creating major financial and legal uncertainty for health care providers across the Commonwealth. It would apply across the continuum of care including to hospitals, doctors, dentists, nurses, optometrists, podiatrists, physician assistants, chiropractors, physical therapists, social workers, and other healthcare professionals. These changes could lead to higher malpractice premiums, reduced insurance availability, and increased health care costs, ultimately threatening access to care – especially in rural and underserved communities. The legislation, which originally focused on clarifying provisions related to collection of pre-judgment interest as part of damage award, was amended in the waning days of the 2026 **Virginia General Assembly** session to fundamentally change the current medical malpractice system. Those changes have been made without key stakeholder input or time for due consideration and debate to produce a well-vetted bill. Rushing substantial legislation late in the process is not an ideal way to craft far-reaching public policy, which should be thoughtfully done. The amended legislation was approved by the **House of Delegates Courts of Justice Committee** this week and a vote by the full House is expected in the days ahead. Now is the time for healthcare providers and stakeholders to make their voices heard. Please take a few moments to use this [link](#) to e-mail your legislator and ask them to oppose Senate Bill 536. The **VHHA Government Affairs Team** remains on the ground at the State Capitol in Richmond working on this urgent matter as well as a range of other legislative and state budget issues of interest to hospitals and health systems.

VHHA Solutions Partners with Andor Health to Support Providers with Access to Agentic AI Tools

- **Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association (VHHA)** affiliate [VHHA Solutions](#) recently entered into a new strategic partnership with [Andor Health®](#), a leader in agentic AI software infrastructure for healthcare. As part of this collaboration, ThinkAndor® has been selected as an endorsed platform to support care delivery transformation for hospitals and health systems across the Commonwealth as well as non-acute, senior living, and behavioral health settings. By working with Andor Health through VHHA Solutions, organizations can gain access to a single, unified AI software infrastructure to manage care delivery across the care continuum – from the

digital front door and inpatient care to home-based monitoring and post-acute encounters – while ensuring equitable access to high-quality care for rural and underserved communities. Through this partnership, health systems can establish care management programs to align with **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** (CMS) initiatives including the ACCESS Model as well as Rural Health Transformation Program projects. Andor Health’s agentic AI software infrastructure, ThinkAndor®, is a turnkey solution for health systems to streamline chronic care programs. Read more [here](#).

Watch Recap Video of Virginia Hospital Lobby Day at the State Capitol in Richmond

- Highlights from the 2026 Virginia Hospital Lobby Day event recently hosted by VHHA at the State Capitol can be viewed in this [recap video](#). Virginia Hospital Lobby Day is an annual opportunity for representatives from Virginia hospitals and health systems to visit the **Virginia General Assembly** to engage in the public policy process as advocates and share firsthand experience about the healthcare delivery system. This year’s Lobby Day attracted visits from several legislators and representatives from multiple VHHA member health systems. View photos from Hospital Lobby Day [here](#). Another recent VHHA [highlight video](#) recaps the Jan. 28 Centennial Celebration hosted in Richmond that featured **Virginia Lieutenant Governor Ghazala Hashmi**, 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 [Medical Economics](#), [News USA](#), and [Marijuana Moment](#).

News Updates

White House, CMS Announce Efforts to Curb Healthcare Fraud, Solicit Public Comments

The **White House**, the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** (HHS), and the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** (CMS) recently [announced](#) a series of actions intended to prevent Medicare and Medicaid fraud. They include deferring \$259.5 million of quarterly federal Medicaid funding in Minnesota to prevent payment of certain claims while an investigation is occurring; a nationwide [moratorium](#) on Medicare enrollment for certain durable medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotics, and supplies (DMEPOS) suppliers; and a nationwide call to action for Americans to support fraud prevention, including stakeholder input on how CMS can expand and strengthen its efforts. A [request for information](#) has been issued seeking stakeholder feedback on potential regulatory changes related to combatting fraud. The deadline for public comments is March 30.

VDH, VCHA Support AAP Pediatric Vaccination Schedule After Revised Federal Recommendations

In separate statements, the **Virginia Department of Health** (VDH) and the **Virginia Community Healthcare Association** (VCHA), recently endorsed the **American Academy of Pediatrics** (AAP)

[vaccination guidelines for 2026](#), which differ from current federal recommendations. The VDH [statement](#) affirmed a “commitment to vaccines as an essential tool in protecting the health of children, their families, and their communities” and encouraged healthcare providers “to rely on their clinical training and professional judgment” and consult guidance from AAP and the **American Academy of Family Physicians** “when engaging in shared clinical decision-making with parents, caregivers, and patients.” The statement from VCHA, which represents Virginia’s network of Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC), acknowledged that “some parents, guardians and patients have concerns about the effects of vaccinations and have chosen not to vaccinate their children” and encouraged those families “to talk with their healthcare providers about their hesitancy, the symptoms and risks of vaccine-preventable diseases and the potential implications if their child contracts one of these diseases.” Those recent pronouncements follow developments in January when the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC) [announced](#) revisions to its recommended childhood immunization schedule in response to an earlier [directive](#) from **U.S. President Donald Trump** instructing relevant federal authorities to review the practices of other developed nations. Under the [revised federal standards](#), the CDC recommends fewer vaccinations for all children. In all, the CDC is recommending 11 immunizations for all children, compared to 17 previously recommended by the agency. Read more [here](#).

VDH Investigates Potential Measles Exposure in Lynchburg

This week, the **Virginia Department of Health** (VDH) [shared](#) that it has been notified of a confirmed measles case involving a non-Virginian who traveled through the state’s Southwest Region. According to VDH, the potential exposure event occurred at the **Centra Lynchburg General Hospital** emergency department from 10:15 a.m.-1:15 p.m. on Monday, March 2. So far this year, VDH has [documented](#) 10 cases of measles in Virginia, which is double the total case count in all of 2025. The increase in cases during 2026 comes as South Carolina is dealing with a measles outbreak and states across the nation have dealt with elevated cases over the past year. Dating to last year, the current South Carolina measles outbreak sits at 990 confirmed cases as of March 3, according to the **South Carolina Department of Public Health**, which [reports](#) that the majority of cases are concentrated in counties along its northern border. Meanwhile, the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC) recently [reported](#) that there have been 1,136 confirmed measles cases in the U.S. as of Feb. 26, with the majority of those documented in 28 jurisdictions. In 2025, 2,281 confirmed measles cases were reported in the U.S., the most in a year going back several decades. Measles is a contagious virus that can be spread when an infected individual breathes or coughs. Measles symptoms 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 usually begin 7–14 days after exposure but can appear up to 21 days after exposure. Measles is a serious illness that can cause complications that lead to hospitalization and even death. Vaccines are available to protect against measles: they include the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine or the measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella (MMRV) vaccine series.

CMS Extends Application Deadline for GENEROUS Drug Payment Model

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** (CMS) have [extended](#) the application deadline for a new drug pricing program model. The revised deadline is April 30. In November, CMS announced the new GENERating cost Reductions fOr U.S. (GENEROUS) Medicaid Model pilot program to enable state Medicaid programs to purchase drugs included in the pilot at prices aligned with those paid in select other countries, allowing Americans to benefit from fairer, more competitive pricing. At the time, CMS released a [request for applications](#) (RFA) for drug manufacturers interested in participating in the

GENEROUS Model. The agency will also seek letters of intent from state Medicaid agencies interested in participating. States that express interest will later have the opportunity to formally apply and potentially opt in to the terms and prices CMS negotiates with participating drug manufacturers whose applications are accepted. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

HHS, DOE Announce Medical School Commitments to Provide Nutrition Training to Future Physicians

This week, the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)** and the **U.S. Department of Education (DOE)** [announced](#) commitments from dozens of U.S. medical schools to include meaningful nutrition training for future physicians starting in the fall of 2026. In all 53 medical schools, representing 31 states, committed to provide 40 hours of nutrition education, or to implement a 40-hour competency equivalent. These commitments are aligned with a commitment by the **Trump Administration** to support nutritional education. HHS pledged to dedicate \$5 million through a **National Institutes of Health** nutrition education challenge to support medical schools, nursing residency, nutrition science, and dietician programs that integrate nutrition education into their curricula. [Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine \(VCOM\)](#) in Blacksburg, VA is among the 53 medical schools included in the announcement.

VRHA Accepting Applications for Student Representatives on Board of Directors

The **Virginia Rural Health Association (VRHA)** is accepting [applications for student representatives](#) on the **VRHA Board of Directors**. Student representatives to the Board of Directors are expected to serve as a communication link between current and future VRHA leaders. Students selected will need to interact with the VRHA Board Members and students in a wide variety of health-related programs. Student representatives will help VRHA achieve its strategic goals, with particular emphasis on increasing awareness of VRHA and the benefits of VRHA membership among students. Selected individuals will receive complimentary registration and hotel room at the VRHA Annual Conference, as well as a **National Rural Health Association** student membership. Applicants must be full-time undergraduate or graduate students in good academic standing in a health-related program and be a current VRHA [member](#).

AHA Seeks Nominations for Next Generation Leaders Fellowship Program

The **American Hospital Association (AHA)** is accepting [nominations](#) of candidates for the [AHA Next Generation Leaders Fellowship](#), a year-long program that pairs Fellows with executive-level mentors and culminates in a capstone project. Ideal candidates include high-potential healthcare leaders and emerging professionals ready to take a next career step as they advance to top leadership roles in the next five to 10 years. Select nominees may qualify for financial support through the [Richard J. Umbdenstock Next Generation Leadership Scholarship](#), which honors President Emeritus Rich Umbdenstock and his legacy of advancing healthcare leadership. The application deadline is March 31.

VHWD A Accepting Applications for Summer Student Leadership Program

Through April 3, the **Virginia Health Workforce Development Authority (VHWD A)** is accepting applications for its Student Leadership Program, which is a two-week fellowship that exposes students to opportunities in healthcare leadership. During the program spanning June 1-June 12, participants will engage with “healthcare leaders and policymakers to gain a deeper understanding of the complex problems facing Virginia’s health professionals and the delivery of healthcare services.” Program

activities cover a wide range of topics and include guest lectures, informative panels, group policy projects, local tours, and social mixers. It is on-site in Richmond. Free housing is provided as are several meals and group activities. Participating student fellows will receive a stipend of \$1,200 to cover additional expenses. Visit this [link](#) to learn more and apply.

Events

Join March 12 Webinar on CMS ACCESS Model Presented by VHHA Solutions Partner ChartSpan

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** (CMS) is currently [accepting applications](#) for the ACCESS (Advancing Chronic Care with Effective, Scalable Solutions) Model. This new voluntary program is designed to expand access to technology-supported care for Medicare beneficiaries with chronic conditions. To support healthcare officials, **VHHA Solutions** endorsed partner **ChartSpan** is hosting a free webinar whose content will address common questions about care management models. Webinar topics will include information about the ACCESS Model, how it differs from other Medicare programs such as chronic care management (CCM) and advance primary care management (APCM), compliance requirements for each program, financial assessments for the various models, and more. The webinar is scheduled for March 12 at noon ET. Register [here](#).

Register for Virginia Medical-Legal Partnership Coalition Kickoff Webinar on March 25

VCU Health is inviting interested individuals to attend an inaugural webinar launching Virginia's first statewide Medical-Legal Partnership (MLP) Coalition. MLPs integrate civil legal services into healthcare settings to address health-harming legal needs – from unsafe housing and benefit denials to family instability and employment issues. MLPs improve patient health, reduce healthcare costs, and advance patient health and well-being. [VCU Health](#) has embraced this model and is helping to build a statewide movement to expand MLPs across the Commonwealth. The webinar is ideal for organizations with an MLP, those that are exploring the model, or just learning about it. The webinar is scheduled for March 25 at 1 p.m. ET. Visit this [link](#) to register. Questions may be directed to mlp@vcuhealth.org.

Registration Open for Virginia Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Summit on April 22 in Richmond

Registration is now open for the **Virginia Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Summit** scheduled for April 22, 2026 at The Westin-Richmond. "The Preparedness Crossroads: Integrating Legacy Challenges with Emerging Global Threats" is the theme for the Summit being hosted by the **Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association** (VHHA) and the **VHHA Foundation**. Summit programming will feature local, state, and national speakers sharing insights on topics related to strengthening the Commonwealth's preparedness for threats to the healthcare delivery system including cyber-attacks, outpatient center safety and preparedness, continuing operations during a water interruption, department level business continuity, tracking costs during disasters, and supply chain management during disasters. Visit this [link](#) to register and view additional program information.

Podcast

VHHA Patients Come First Podcast Features CHoR PA on Pediatric Congenital Heart Surgery Team

This episode of VHHA's *Patients Come First* podcast features **Hugh Cline**, MPAS, PA-C, NRP, a surgical physician assistant with the pediatric congenital heart surgery team at **Children's Hospital of Richmond at VCU (CHoR)**. He joins us for a conversation about his full circle journey – he began life as a newborn at CHoR in need of extended intensive medical care and he now works with other families whose children are receiving that type of critical care – as well as the work of CHoR 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](#), [Podcast Health](#), 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 pcfpcast@vhha.com.



Around the State



Dr. Elizabeth Brunn, Vice Chief of the Women's Service Line at **VHC Health**, has been recognized as a *Washington Business Journal* 40 Under 40 honoree. She serves as the youngest member of the **VHC Health Executive Council**. Dr. Brunn specializes in minimally invasive gynecologic surgery. She graduated from Colgate University with a degree in cellular neuroscience and biology. She earned her medical degree from George Washington University with a focus on global health, and completed her residency at Medstar Washington Hospital Center, Georgetown University. Dr. Brunn is an Instructor of clinical education in obstetrics and gynecology at Georgetown University Medical Center. She is an active diplomate at the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology, a fellow at the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, an active member at the American Association of Gynecologic Laparoscopists, and an article reviewer for the *Journal of Gynecologic Surgery* and the *Journal of Minimally Invasive Gynecology*. Read more [here](#).

Melinda Hancock, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer for **Sentara Health**, will be a speaker at the Becker's Healthcare 16th Annual Meeting, which will take place April 13-16, 2026 in Chicago, IL. Hancock joined Sentara in August 2021 as Senior Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer, before transitioning to Executive Vice President, Chief Transformation Officer in May 2023. Prior to Sentara, she was the Chief Administrative Officer and Chief Financial Officer at **VCU Health System**. Hancock also previously worked as the Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer for the Virginia market of **Bon Secours Health System**.





Suzanne McDaniels, DNP, RN, PCCN-K, has been named Inpatient Nursing Director at **Carilion Clinic**. She currently serves as President of the **Virginia Nurses Association Roanoke Valley Chapter**. She previously served as Unit Director at Carilion Clinic. She earned her bachelor of science degree at Ohio University and doctor of nursing practice degree at Capella University.

Ballad Health has selected **Kevin Rinks** as Chief Executive Officer of **Holston Valley Medical Center** and **Indian Path Community Hospital**. Rinks brings more than 15 years of advanced healthcare leadership experience, most recently serving as chief executive officer of the 295-bed St. Vincent's Southside Hospital. Prior to that role, Rinks served as CEO of St. Vincent's Clay County Hospital. Earlier in his career, he held executive leadership positions with Mercy, Community Health Systems, and Lifepoint Health, including service as chief financial officer and vice president of operations across multiple acute care hospitals. A Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives (FACHE), Rinks earned a master's degree in health service administration from Strayer University and a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Tennessee at Martin. Read more [here](#).

