



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 systems. In the past week, these are some developments of interest to Virginia hospitals and health systems:

VHHA Hosts 2026 Virginia Emergency Preparedness Summit in Richmond

- This week, VHHA held the 2026 **Virginia Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Summit** at The Westin-Richmond. "The Preparedness Crossroads: Integrating Legacy Challenges with Emerging Global Threats" was the theme for the Summit hosted by the **Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association** (VHHA) and the **VHHA Foundation**. A packed house of more than 250 attendees had the opportunity to learn from and engage with Summit programming 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, and supply chain management during disasters. Participants were also eligible to earn continuing education credits. Read more about the event [here](#), view the program brochure at this [link](#), and view an event photo gallery [here](#).

VHHA Invites Hospital Staff, Stakeholders to Free Documentary Screenings Honoring Hospitals and Patients

- In celebration and recognition of hospitals and their teams, the **Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association** (VHHA) is inviting hospital leaders, staff, and stakeholders to join us as guests at a series of free screenings of a new documentary being premiered around the Commonwealth in May. *Healing and Hope: Hospitals' Legacy of Service in Virginia* is a new documentary produced by VHHA that highlights the positive economic and public health impact of hospitals, their evolving work, and their history in Virginia as told through the stories of Virginia patients and providers. VHHA is hosting the free regional screenings in recognition of National Hospital Week and the Association's 100th anniversary. VHHA encourages hospital leaders, team members, and community partners to attend one of the screenings in their home region. Documentary showings will be held on **Monday, May 11 at The Millwald Theatre in Wytheville** (Southwest Virginia, RSVP [here](#)); **Tuesday, May 12 at The Cultural Arts Center at Glen Allen** (Central Virginia, RSVP [here](#)); **Wednesday, May 13 at the Alamo Draffhouse Woodbridge** (Northern Virginia, RSVP [here](#)); **Thursday, May 14 at the Woodstock Community Theatre** (Shenandoah Valley, RSVP [here](#)); **Friday, May 15 at The American Theatre in Hampton** (Hampton Roads, RSVP [here](#)); and **Monday, May 18 at The Grandin Theatre in Roanoke** (RSVP [here](#)). Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for all showings with screenings at 6:30 p.m. It is free to attend the screenings and refreshments will be provided. Guests are strongly encouraged to RSVP. Visit this [link](#) for more details.

VHHA Leaders Attend AHA Annual Meeting

- This week, VHHA leaders attended the 2026 **American Hospital Association (AHA) Annual Membership Meeting** held in Washington, D.C. The session convened healthcare leaders, policymakers, and industry experts for three days of policy-focused dialogue and strategic collaboration. The meeting centered on advancing advocacy priorities and strengthening connections between hospitals and federal decision-makers.

News Updates

Virginia General Assembly Gathers in Richmond to Consider Governor's Legislative Changes

The **Virginia General Assembly** was back in Richmond this week for the reconvened session, which is the annual date on the calendar when lawmakers gather to consider legislative amendments and vetoes from the Governor. This year, **Virginia Governor Abigail Spanberger** issued eight vetoes and proposed amendments to 180 bills, of which 137 were accepted by the legislature. Amendments offered by the Governor to paid family medical leave [legislation](#), which has implications for employers, were accepted by lawmakers, who separately rejected gubernatorial amendments to paid sick leave [legislation](#). Also rejected were amendments to [legislation](#) establishing a Prescription Drug Affordability Advisory Panel and [legislation](#) pertaining to collective bargaining rights for public employees. The legislature also approved an amendment to a [bill](#) related to information disclosure standards on medical malpractice insurance financial information and claim activity. Separately, the **VHHA Government Affairs Team** attended a [bill signing ceremony](#) the Governor held for hospital-supported legislation focused on [maternal and pregnancy health services](#), including for [postpartum moms](#).

CMS, FDA Announce New RAPID Pathway for Quicker Access to Medical Devices for Medicare Patients

This week, the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)** and the **U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** [announced](#) a new pathway for expedited access to certain medical devices for people on Medicare. The Regulatory Alignment for Predictable and Immediate Device (RAPID) coverage pathway allows CMS and FDA to work with innovators earlier in the technology development lifecycle so that evidence generated for FDA review can also support Medicare coverage decisions. This alignment of regulatory and coverage expectations through the RAPID coverage pathway is designed to significantly reduce delays that have historically occurred between FDA market authorization and Medicare national coverage determinations.

President Trump Issues Order to Boost Research on Psychedelic Drugs for Mental Health Therapy

U.S. President Donald Trump recently issued an [executive order](#) directing applicable federal agencies to further explore innovative therapeutic approaches to mental health treatment beyond “existing prescription medications.” The order notes that “psychedelic drugs, including ibogaine compounds, show potential in clinical studies to address serious mental illnesses for patients whose conditions persist after completing standard therapy.” The order calls on the **U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** to “facilitate and establish a pathway for eligible patients to access psychedelic drugs, including ibogaine compounds, under the Right to Try Act.” It directs the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)** to “allocate at least \$50 million from existing funds to support and partner with state governments that have enacted or are developing programs to advance psychedelic drugs for serious mental illnesses.” And it directs HHS to collaborate with the **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs** and the private sector “to increase clinical trial participation, data sharing, and real-world evidence generation regarding psychedelic drugs.”

CMS Offers ‘Make Hospital Food Healthier’ Pledge

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)** are [encouraging](#) hospitals to sign a voluntary pledge focused on healthy food offerings. The pledge follows a recent CMS [memorandum](#) regarding

hospital patient food and nutrition service expectations under the federal Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) 2025-2030. The guidelines focus on prioritizing whole and minimally processed foods. They are intended to help inform patient nutrition services and related hospital protocols. Under the federal Conditions of Participation, hospitals are advised to ensure that their menus meet patient nutritional needs in accordance with recognized dietary practices, qualified dietitian oversight, maintenance of a current therapeutic diet manual, and integration of dietary services into Quality Assessment and Performance Improvement (QAPI) processes.

Events

VHHA to Host May 4 Webinar Providing General Assembly Legislative and Budget Update

Virginia hospital leaders are invited to join a webinar hosted by the **VHHA Government Affairs Team** on May 4 at noon to provide a recap of legislative developments from the 2026 **Virginia General Assembly** that hospitals and health systems need to know. This presentation will offer comprehensive analysis of significant legislative and budgetary changes impacting hospitals and health systems across the Commonwealth. It will also feature a preview of the upcoming election cycle as well as Virginia's evolving political landscape and how those developments may shape future healthcare policy. Visit this [link](#) to register for the webinar.

Register for the Virginia Healthcare Workforce Summit, a Virtual Event on May 19

Register for the **2026 Virginia Healthcare Workforce Summit**, which is scheduled to be held May 19 as a virtual event. "Reimagining the Healthcare Workforce: Innovation, Engagement, and the Future of Work" is the theme of this year's Summit, which will explore innovative strategies for hospitals to adapt their practices, focusing on developing, recruiting, retaining, and supporting team members in a rapidly changing workplace. Visit this [link](#) to register and view additional program information.

Register for IHI Open School Quality & Patient Safety Certificate Program

The **VHHA Center for Healthcare Excellence** is again offering hospital team members the opportunity to participate in the **Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) Open School Certificate Program in Quality & Patient Safety**. Through the online learning modules available, program participants have one year to complete 13 core courses (from a menu of more than 30) to earn a Basic Quality & Safety Certificate. Those courses take an estimated 13-22 hours to complete, and 17.75 continuing education credits are available for the 13 courses. The [courses](#) offer a dynamic learning environment for healthcare professionals of all levels. IHI is an independent not-for-profit organization and a leading innovator, convener, partner, and driver of results in health and healthcare improvement worldwide. Its online courses are created by world-renowned faculty in quality improvement, patient safety, triple aim for populations, person- and family-centered care, and leadership. Content is delivered through narrative, video, and interactive discussion. Access to courses will be available from June 1, 2026-May 30, 2027. Healthcare professionals including physicians, nurses, allied health professionals, hospital managers, quality, safety, risk management, patient experience, and population health staff and leaders are encouraged to apply for the program. The cost is \$199 to participate or \$399 without the VHHA group rate. The VHHA Center for Healthcare Excellence will host a May 14 informational webinar about the IHI Open School Certificate Program in Quality & Patient Safety program for 2026-2027. Register for the webinar [here](#). Please contact **Rachel Pryor** with questions at rpryor@vhha.com.

Podcast

VHHA *Patients Come First* Podcast Features Sentara Behavioral Health Initiative

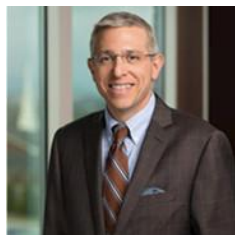
This episode of VHHA's *Patients Come First* podcast features **Erin Martin**, Manager of Behavioral Health with **Sentara Health**, who joins for a conversation about her work, the Justice Care Coordination program at Sentara Health, and more. Listen to the episode [here](#) and hear past episodes through 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 10 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



Arner



Levine



Rosner

Steve Arner, President and CEO of **Carilion Clinic**; **Alan Levine**, Chairman, President and CEO of **Ballad Health**; and **Dr. Mitchell H. Rosner**, MD, CEO of **UVA Health** and Executive Vice President for Health Affairs at the **University of Virginia**; have been named to the *Becker's Hospital Review* 2026 list of great leaders in healthcare. Read more

[here](#).



Dr. Arturo Saavedra, MD, PhD, has been appointed Executive Vice President and provost at **Virginia Commonwealth University** after serving in the role on an interim basis since December 2025. Previously, Saavedra served as dean of the **VCU School of Medicine** and executive vice president for medical affairs beginning in 2023. He came to VCU from the **UVA School of Medicine**, where he was the Kenneth E. Greer Endowed professor and chair in dermatology and the president and interim chief executive officer for the University Physicians' Group. Prior to UVA, Dr. Saavedra was quality chair for the Dermatology Department at the Brigham and Women's Hospital and was later asked to serve as the vice chair for Clinical Affairs and medical director in the Department of Dermatology at the Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School. After graduating magna cum laude from Harvard College with a degree in biological sciences, Dr. Saavedra

received a combined medical and doctoral degree from the University of Pennsylvania, with specialized training in pharmacology. He completed his residency training in internal medicine at the Brigham and Women's Hospital, where he was also chief resident. He graduated from the Harvard Combined Dermatology Residency Training Program and completed his fellowship in dermatopathology. He also earned an MBA in entrepreneurial finance from the Babson College Graduate School of Business. Read more [here](#).

Ballad Health Medical Associates has selected **Loree Ching** as its new chief financial officer, where she will oversee financial planning and ensure resources are aligned to support high quality patient care across the organization's multistate network. Ching brings 26 years of healthcare finance experience, including senior leadership roles within large physician groups and integrated health systems. Most recently, she served as vice president of finance for Acclaim Physician Group in Fort Worth, TX, where she led financial operations for a \$200 million, 500 provider network. Her background also includes senior finance leadership positions across health systems in Oklahoma, Texas, and Kentucky, where she supported physician enterprises, hospital operations and value based care initiatives. Ching holds a bachelor's degree in business administration with an accounting emphasis from Texas A&M University and is a licensed certified public accountant. Read more [here](#).



Carissa Etters has been named the inaugural Associate Vice President for **VCU Health** Marketing and Communications. She has been serving as the interim associate vice president of VCU Health Strategy and Marketing since October 2025. Etters joined VCU in 2014 as public relations manager for VCU Health and has held several leadership roles over her 12-year tenure, including assistant director of Public Affairs and most recently associate vice president of enterprise communications for VCU Health. Prior to VCU Health, Etters held internal communications and media relations roles at Vidant Health (now ECU Health) and spent nearly a decade in broadcast journalism at WNCT, a CBS affiliate in Greenville, NC. Etters received a bachelor of science in communication from East Carolina University. She previously served as an instructor for the Virginia Executive Institute, a committee co-chair with the Society for Healthcare Marketing & Development, and a member of the Executive Committee for the Center for Animal-Human Interaction. Her work has been recognized with multiple Public Relations Society of America Awards of Excellence and Merit, as well as an NCAP Outstanding News Operation award. Read more [here](#).

Dr. India Sisler, MD, has been appointed Division Chief of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology at the **Children's Hospital of Richmond at VCU**. Dr. Sisler joined the faculty at CHoR in 2009. Dr. Sisler, an associate professor of pediatrics, also has served as director of the Comprehensive Pediatric Sickle Cell Program since 2009 and as clinical director for the Division of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology since 2015. In addition to patient care and leadership, Dr. Sisler is actively involved in clinical research, with sustained funding from the National Institutes of Health, Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute, Health Resources & Services Administration, Virginia Department of Health, and industry partners. At the national level, Dr. Sisler holds leadership roles with the American Society of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology and the Globin Research Network for Data and Discovery and is widely recognized for her contributions to professional development and workforce advancement. Read more [here](#).





Sharon Brickhouse Martin, Vice President of Health Services Integration at **VHC Health**, has been appointed to the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors by **Virginia Governor Abigail Spanberger**. Read more [here](#).