



FYI Weekly

HEALTHCARE NEWS FOR VIRGINIA'S
HOSPITALS AND HEALTH SYSTEMS

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FEATURED CONTENT

[VHHA in Action](#)

[News Updates](#)

- [FDA Announces Regulatory Actions to Accelerate Development of New Mental Health Medications](#)
- [CDC Data Shows Elevated Hospital Emergency Visits for Tick Bites](#)
- [CMS Memo Shares Reminder of Sprinkler Requirements for High-Rise Healthcare Buildings](#)
- [FDA Shares Results from Infant Formula Testing Campaign](#)
- [CMS Offers 'Make Hospital Food Healthier' Pledge](#)

[Events](#)

- [Register for the Virginia Healthcare Workforce Summit, a Virtual Event on May 19](#)
- [Register for IHI Open School Quality & Patient Safety Certificate Program](#)
- [VHEMP to Host June 12 Webinar Briefing with National Weather Service on 2026 Hurricane Season](#)

[Podcast](#)

- [VHHA Patients Come First Podcast Features Bath Community Hospital President](#)

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

VHHA Invites Hospital Staff, Stakeholders to Free Documentary Screenings Honoring Healthcare Providers

- 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 Nurses Week**, **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 Drafthouse 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.

Register for VHHA 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.

News Updates

FDA Announces Regulatory Actions to Accelerate Development of New Mental Health Medications

The **U.S. Food and Drug Administration** (FDA) recently [announced](#) regulatory efforts to “support the development of serotonin-2A agonists and related products, a class of perception-altering psychedelic medications” as part of a push to accelerate access to treatment for patients with serious mental illness. The FDA news follows a recent [executive order](#) from **U.S. President Donald Trump** 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.” In another development, the **White House** recently [announced](#) a most-favored-nation (MFN) drug pricing deal with Regeneron to lower prescription prices for medications including its cholesterol medication Praluent. That is the 17th MFN deal announced by the **Trump Administration**.

CDC Data Shows Elevated Hospital Emergency Visits for Tick Bites

Data from the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** shows that the current volume of visits to hospital emergency rooms for tick bites around the nation is higher than usual. In fact, the CDC indicates that “weekly rates of ER visits for tick bites are the highest for this time of year since 2017.” May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month and the CDC urges the public to take steps to protect against tick bites and the serious diseases they can cause. Read more [here](#).

CMS Memo Shares Reminder of Sprinkler Requirements for High-Rise Healthcare Buildings

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)** recently issued a [reminder](#) to hospitals about the requirement for all CMS-certified facilities “classified as new or existing healthcare occupancies located in a high-rise building must have an approved, supervised automatic sprinkler system throughout the entire building by July 5, 2028.” This standard is established in connection to a 2016 CMS [final rule](#) on fire safety requirements for certain healthcare facilities.

FDA Shares Results from Infant Formula Testing Campaign

This week, the **U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** [announced](#) results from a large-scale testing campaign focused on chemical contaminants in infant formula available in the U.S. The [testing shows](#) “an overwhelming majority of samples had undetectable or very low levels of contaminants, affirming that the U.S. infant formula supply is safe.” More than 300 infant formula samples were tested for lead, mercury, cadmium, arsenic, pesticides (including glyphosate and glufosinate), per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), and phthalates. Although contaminants were low in the testing, the FDA plans further testing and monitoring.

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

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.

VHEMP to Host June 12 Webinar Briefing with National Weather Service on 2026 Hurricane Season

The **Virginia Healthcare Emergency Management Program (VHEMP)** – a partnership between the **Virginia Department of Health (VDH)**, the **Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association (VHHA)**, and the four regional healthcare coalitions – is hosting a one-hour webinar on June 12 at noon featuring **Katie Carter**, Emergency Response Specialist with the **National Weather Service (NWS)**. The briefing will focus on the 2026 Atlantic Hurricane Season and available NWS resources to assist in readiness and response. Register for the event [here](#).

Podcast

VHHA Patients Come First Podcast Features Bath Community Hospital President

This episode of VHHA's *Patients Come First* podcast features **Dr. Jane Russell**, PharmD, MBA, FACHE, the President and Chief Executive Officer of **Bath Community Hospital** in Hot Springs, VA. She joins us for a conversation about her professional journey, the work of Bath Community Hospital as a rural, critical access provider, 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](#), [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



VCU Health Chief Operating Officer **Michael Elliott**, PharmD, MSHA, FACHE, has been elected to the Advisory Board of the **Sorensen Institute for Civic Leadership**. He is a graduate of the Sorensen Political Leaders Program class of 2021. Dr. Elliott is a member of the **VHHA Board of Directors** and a Past Board Chair. He previously served as senior vice president and chief transformation officer at Lynchburg-based **Centra Health**. Earlier in his career, Dr. Elliott served as a clinical pharmacist and progressed through several leadership roles with **Sentara Health**.

Dr. Ray Wadlow, Division Chief of Oncology at **Inova Schar Cancer**, has been appointed to the Executive Committee of the **PRECEDE Foundation Inc.**, a global organization focused on advancing early detection and improving outcomes in pancreatic cancer. Dr. Wadlow earned a bachelor's degree from Dartmouth College and a medical degree from the UVA School of Medicine. His mother, former **Virginia State Senator Emily Couric**, passed away from pancreatic cancer at 54. Pancreatic cancer is the deadliest form of common cancers and has a five-year survival rate of 13 percent. The majority of pancreatic cancer cases are detected late because the disease often does not display early symptoms.



Ashley Ragland, MBA, is moving into the role of Manager of Nursing Business Operations and Finance at **UVA Health**. She has been with the health system for nearly 20 years, first joining as an administrative assistant in inpatient oncology. Ragland earned a bachelor's degree from Mary Baldwin University and a master's degree in business administration from the College of William & Mary.