



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 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 and state and federal policy issues.

VHHA Hosts Webinar on VDH Guidance for Optimizing MDRO Flags in EDCC

- Patient transfers involve dozens of critical safety elements in a single handoff moment. A patient's infection status – including pending laboratory results, known colonization or active infection with a multidrug-resistant organism (MDRO), and the transmission-based precautions currently in place – is among the most critical information to convey. Non-disclosure of such details can lead to potential exposures for healthcare workers and patients, resulting in costly contact investigations for hospitals. This week, VHHA hosted a webinar to provide information on two layers of protection to prevent such miscommunication: the new MDRO Communications Guide from the **Virginia Department of Health (VDH)** and optimizing the use of the MDRO flags in the Emergency Department Care Coordination System (EDCC).

VHEMP Hosts Webinar Briefing with National Weather Service on 2026 Hurricane Season

- This week, the **Virginia Healthcare Emergency Management Program (VHEMP)** – a partnership between the **Virginia Department of Health (VDH)**, the **Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association (VHHA)**, and the regional healthcare coalitions – hosted a webinar featuring **Katie Carter**, Emergency Response Specialist with the **National Weather Service (NWS)**. The briefing focused on the 2026 Atlantic Hurricane Season and available NWS resources to assist in readiness and response.

View VHEMP Webinar Recording on Ebola Virus Disease

- The **Virginia Healthcare Emergency Management Program (VHEMP)** – a partnership between the **Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association (VHHA)**, the **Virginia Department of Health (VDH)**, and the regional healthcare coalitions – recently hosted a webinar to provide an overview on Ebola virus disease. Several African nations are currently experiencing an Ebola outbreak. View a webinar recording [here](#) and see presentation slides through this [link](#).

View VHHA Documentary on Hospital Stories, Healthcare History Across the Commonwealth

- The new short film VHHA produced to honor healthcare professionals during the Association's **100th anniversary** is now available online. *Healing and Hope: Hospitals' Legacy of Service in Virginia* is the documentary title and the film can be viewed online [here](#). Last month, the **Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association (VHHA)** hosted a series of events in theaters around Virginia to show the short film 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. Free film screening events were hosted May 11-18 in Wytheville, Glen Allen, Woodbridge, Woodstock, Hampton, and Roanoke during **National Nurses Week** and **National Hospital Week**. Read more about the project [here](#). View a documentary trailer [here](#), an accompanying program [here](#), and photos from the premiere events 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 [VPM](#), the [Virginia Mercury](#), the [Augusta Free Press](#), the [Virginia Politics Newsletter](#), and [WSET](#).

News Updates

Governor Signs Bill Banning Weapons in Hospitals During Ceremony at Sentara Health Facility

In a recent ceremony at **Sentara Norfolk General Hospital**, **Virginia Governor Abigail Spanberger** signed the [Protect Healthcare Workers Act](#), which is legislation pursued by Sentara for several years that bans firearms, certain knives, tasers, mace, and other weapons from hospitals and free-standing emergency departments that provide mental health services. The law makes it a Class 1 misdemeanor to knowingly and intentionally violate that restriction. Under the law, healthcare providers must post notice of the restrictions. Read more [here](#).

Virginia Joint Commission on Health Care Issues Report on ‘At Risk’ Rural Hospitals

The [Virginia Joint Commission on Health Care](#), a state legislative panel, recently met and received a staff presentation on the financial condition of Virginia’s rural hospitals. The analysis by Commission staff flags several issues that represent financial complications for rural hospitals including inadequate Medicaid and Medicare reimbursements, a payer mix that is largely composed of patients with government-backed coverage, lower volumes, and workforce recruitment and retention challenges, among other factors. The analysis further notes that policy changes in H.R. 1 of 2025, the budget reconciliation legislation of 2025 that cuts nearly \$1 trillion in healthcare funding over a decade, are projected to lead to significant coverage losses and sharp funding reductions for hospitals. The Commission staff presentation includes a list of several rural hospitals the analysis deems to be at risk for closure. Read the report [here](#) and view presentation slides through this [link](#).

Virginia Jobs Program Launches Healthcare Careers for Everyone Initiative

[Virginia Works](#), the Commonwealth’s workforce development agency that connects job seekers to careers and employers to skilled talent, recently launched the [Healthcare Careers for Everyone](#) initiative that is a portal intended to help Virginians of every background and experience level explore, train for, and step into healthcare careers. VHHA and [On Board Virginia](#) are supporters of the effort. Read more [here](#).

HHS, CMS Leaders Advise Hospitals on Price Transparency Expectations in Video Message

This week, **U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Robert Kennedy Jr.** and **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Administrator Dr. Mehmet Oz** issued a [video message](#) as a “formal notice” to hospitals regarding compliance with federal price transparency rules. In the video, Kennedy and Oz advise organizations to comply with federal rules on posting healthcare price

information or face the risk of punitive action. To support patients in informed medical decision making, VHHA runs the [Control Your Care](#) public education campaign. The Association has also championed the passage of several consumer-focused state laws on health policy reform, and it maintains an [online price transparency tool](#) that links to price transparency information for hospitals across Virginia. [Turquoise Health](#), an independent data analytics firm, tracks state-by-state hospital compliance with price transparency standards and has found that Virginia hospitals are broadly compliant with the rules. Read further news coverage [here](#).

CMS Accepting Public Comments on Medicaid Work Requirement Rule

As part of the policy changes enacted under H.R. 1, the budget reconciliation legislation of 2025, certain adults enrolled in Medicaid will be required to complete 80 monthly hours of qualified community engagement, which could include employment, education, or community service, among other activities. The work requirement is a condition of maintaining Medicaid eligibility and it applies to certain non-pregnant adults ages 19-64. Those exempt from the rule include pregnant and postpartum individuals, those who are disabled or medically frail, and parents and caretakers of children under 14 or people with disabilities, among others. States are expected to implement the Medicaid work requirement standards by Jan. 1, 2027. The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)** recently issued an [interim final rule](#), provisions of which are effective as of July 31. Public comments are being accepted through that date. Read more [here](#).

Events

Register for June 18 Webinar on AI-Native Clinical Services for CMS Rural Health Transformation

Hospital, medical, and healthcare information technology leaders are featured presenters during an upcoming June 18 webinar on how AI-native clinical services can support a new model for rural care delivery that scales intelligently across large and geographically dispersed populations. Featured webinar speakers include former U.S. Chief Technology Officer **Aneesh Chopra, Microsoft** Global Chief Medical Officer **Dr. David C. Rhew, Ballad Health** Chief Operating Officer **Eric Deaton**, and **Andor Health** Chief Growth Officer **Noel Khirsukhani**. The webinar will feature real-world examples from rural Tennessee and other states on strategies to improve care access and outcomes for high-risk populations, including Medicare and Medicaid dual-eligible patients, while helping clinical teams operate more efficiently without additional headcount. The webinar is scheduled for June 18 at 1 p.m. CT. Register [here](#).

Podcast

VHHA *Patients Come First* Podcast Features Personal Health Story of Sentara RMH Cardiologist

This episode of VHHA's *Patients Come First* podcast features **Dr. Amir Eslami**, an interventional cardiologist with **Sentara RMH Medical Center**, who joins us for a conversation about facing his own health challenges while caring for patients, the importance of vulnerability in medicine, taking practical steps towards better health, and the lessons of experience he's gained as a physician and a person. 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



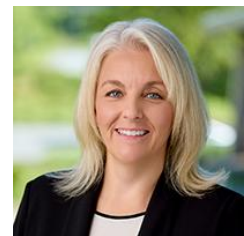
Bartley



Looney



Sulzer



Vanburen

Ballad Health has announced several leadership transitions in Kingsport, TN and Southwest Virginia designed to strengthen clinical collaboration, reinforce operational continuity and continue advancing quality and patient care across the system. The leadership selections include **Kristen Looney**, FNP-C, as Chief Nursing Officer for **Holston Valley Medical Center** and **Indian Path Community Hospital**; and **Nikki Vanburen**, RN, as Chief Nursing Officer for **Lonesome Pine Hospital**, **Lee County Community Hospital**, **Dickenson Community Hospital**, and **Norton Community Hospital**. Additionally, **Dr. Jesse Sulzer** has been selected as Chief Medical Officer for **Holston Valley Medical Center** and **Indian Path Community Hospital**. He will continue as Chief Medical Officer of **Johnston Memorial Hospital** while a national search is conducted to fill that role. **Dr. Jamie Bartley** has been selected as Chief Medical Officer for **Russell County Hospital** and **Smyth County Community Hospital** while continuing as Chief Medical Officer of **Bristol Regional Medical Center**. Read more [here](#).



Carl Cline, President of **Carilion Franklin Memorial Hospital**, has received the DAISY Lifetime Achievement Award from the Virginia Workforce Center and the DAISY Foundation. Cline has served as President of Carilion Franklin Memorial Hospital since 2019 and previously served as Senior Director of Nursing. He also held positions at **Centra Health** as Director of Neuroscience and Manager of the Flight Program.

Three **Sentara Health** nurses have earned statewide recognition from the **Virginia Nursing Workforce Center**, including **Allison Ruhlman**, recipient of the 2026 Virginia State DAISY Nurse Leader Award; **Maria Moore**, Nursing Professional Development Specialist at Sentara RMH Medical Center and recipient of the 2026 Virginia State DAISY Nurse Educator Award; and **Melanie Kaverman**, recipient of the 2026 Virginia State DAISY Extraordinary Nurse Award.