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FEATURED CONTENT

VHHA in Action

News Updates

- AABB Issues Call for Blood Donations to Maintain Supply for Patient Needs
- Federal Consumer Product Safety Agency Initiative Eyes Electronic Medical Records from Hospitals
- CMS Shares Guidance on Required Remittance Advice Remark Codes for No Surprises Act IDR
- CDC Reports 1,947 Cases in Cyclospora Outbreak and 2,318 Measles Cases
- CMS Issues IPF, SNF, IRF Prospective Payment System Final Rules
- VDH Encourages Hospital Responses to CDC Maternity Practice, Infant Nutrition Survey by Sept. 10
- VDH Shares 'Roadmap' to Enhance Nursing Home Regulatory Oversight

Events

- VHHA to Host Aug. 6 Webinar to Preview Virginia Child Care Cost-Sharing Pilot Program
- Virtual Sessions on Hospital Requirement to Report Sickle Cell Diagnoses Set for August
- Registration Open for the Virginia Behavioral Health Summit on Sept. 24 in Richmond
- Save the Date for the Virginia Hospital Leaders Summit in November
- DMAS, DSS to Host Aug. 13 Virtual Town Hall on H.R. 1 Changes Related to Medicaid and Non-Citizens

Podcast

- VHHA *Patients Come First* Podcast Features Leader with VCU Center for Human-Animal Interaction

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 Solutions Partners with ClinIntell Data Analytics Firm to Support Healthcare Organizations

- **Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association** (VHHA) affiliate VHHA Solutions has entered into a new strategic partnership with ClinIntell, a data analytics firm specializing in helping health systems accurately measure clinical severity across inpatient populations to improve documentation and optimize performance. ClinIntell supports hospitals by leveraging claims-based analytics to identify where severity is underrepresented and where physician documentation varies. These insights can support clinical documentation improvement and align physicians around clear clinical thresholds for high-impact conditions to drive consistent improvement. In working with ClinIntell through VHHA Solutions, healthcare organizations can gain access to support services that promote better recognition of instances when clinical severity is underrepresented across an inpatient population, variation that may exist among physicians, and the degree of documentation consistency. That establishes a performance baseline from which organizations can work toward reducing variation and performance improvement. Read more here.

VHHA Foundation Provides Virtual 'Office Hour' Sessions for Hospital Members on Rural Health Grants

- The **VHHA Foundation** team is offering virtual consultations to hospital members seeking technical assistance and guidance on pursuing grant funding for graduate medical education and remote patient monitoring projects under the federal **Rural Health Transformation Program**. Visit this link to book time for a graduate medical education session and this link for an appointment on remote patient monitoring.

Support HosPAC During '100 for 100' New Donor Push, Contributions Help Support Hospital Advocacy

- In Virginia, the start of July each year coincides with the effective date of several new state laws that apply to hospitals, healthcare providers, and the communities they serve. From workforce development and reimbursement policies to regulatory changes and public health initiatives, decisions made in Richmond influence how hospitals deliver care, support staff, and meet patient needs. Sustained advocacy efforts that reflect the voice of hospitals are a critical part of the process. The work of **HosPAC**, the Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association's political action committee, helps advance that engagement. In honor of the VHHA centennial anniversary in 2026, HosPAC has launched the "100 for 100 Campaign" with a goal of welcoming 100 new donors as the Association celebrates 100 years of leadership, partnership, and advocacy on behalf of Virginia's hospitals. That proud legacy is a foundation to build a strong

future in the next century. Each first-time contribution represents another voice supporting Virginia hospitals and health systems at the **Virginia General Assembly**. Growing the community of hospital advocates strengthens HosPAC's ability to build relationships with policymakers and ensures that hospitals have a strong, unified voice on healthcare advocacy. Read more about the campaign here and visit this link to contribute today. Questions about HosPAC can be directed to **Hannah Coley** at hcoley@vhha.com.

VHHA Hosts Webinar to Share Rural Health Funding Updates on GME, Remote Monitoring

- This week, the **VHHA Foundation** hosted a webinar focused on what hospitals need to know about applying for **Rural Health Transformation Program** funding for graduate medical education (GME) and remote patient monitoring projects. During the session, hospital participants connected with VHHA Foundation staff members who have subject matter expertise and information on federal Rural Health Transformation Program particulars such as timing, eligibility rules, and funding. View a webinar recording here and learn more about the program on the VHHA Foundation website.

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 coverage from the Virginia Mercury, WINA, WVAX, the Augusta Free Press, the Washington Post, WTVR, River Towns Magazine, Madison County Magazine, the Winchester Star, Insurance News Net, AOL, the Bluefield Daily Telegraph, Yahoo News, WAVY, the Prince William Times, and the Kenbridge Victoria Dispatch.

News Updates

AABB Issues Call for Blood Donations to Maintain Supply for Patient Needs

The **Association for the Advancement of Blood and Biotherapies** (AABB) Interorganizational Task Force on Domestic Disasters and Acts of Terrorism recently issued a call for blood donations amid a dwindling national supply that the organization said is "trending downward at a concerning pace" to the point that blood centers around the nation "face the risk of not having blood available for every patient when it is needed." In response, the AABB Interorganizational Task Force on Domestic Disasters and Acts of Terrorism is asking eligible blood donors to make an appointment to donate blood, which help keep "hospitals prepared for emergencies and everyday patient care." Visit this link to find a place to donate blood. In a related development, the **American Red Cross** declared a national blood supply crisis this week.

Federal Consumer Product Safety Agency Initiative Eyes Electronic Medical Records from Hospitals

The **U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission** (CPSC) recently announced plans to modernize the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS) that is used for tracking consumer product-related injuries. As part of that work, the agency indicates it "will expand its surveillance network across all 50 states" in gathering electronic health records from U.S. hospital emergency departments "to spot rare

and rapidly emerging hazards far sooner than the legacy system allowed." A CPSC statement indicates the remodeled NEISS system "will exchange data through a federally designated Qualified Health Information Network, supported by contractual privacy requirements and standardized security safeguards." Published reporting on the initiative has characterized the effort as a broad expansion of the agency's traditional scope that calls on hospitals to share potentially sensitive patient data with a federal agency. According to CPSC, the new effort "is expected to become fully effective by the beginning of 2027."

CMS Shares Guidance on Required Remittance Advice Remark Codes for No Surprises Act

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** (CMS) recently shared guidance on the use of remittance advice remark codes (RARC) that convey information about claims processing to communicate information related to whether or not each item or service within a claim is subject to surprise billing and federal independent dispute resolution (IDR) provisions under the No Surprises Act. The guidance follows a final rule issued by several federal agencies in June to update the independent dispute resolution (IDR) process for resolving claim disputes between healthcare providers, health insurers, and air ambulance service providers under the No Surprises Act. The rule is intended to streamline the IDR process. Read more on that here. The regulations are effective Aug. 3 and the specified RARCs apply to "a claim for payment for health care items and services furnished" by applicable entities on or after Jan. 1, 2027.

CDC Reports 1,947 Cases in Cyclospora Outbreak and 2,318 Measles Cases

The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC) recently reported there have been 1,947 confirmed domestic cases of cyclosporiasis. Many cyclospora cases have been linked to a multi-state outbreak attributed to a brand of iceberg lettuce that has been recalled. In the Commonwealth, the **Virginia Department of Health** (VDH) has reported 37 cases so far this year. Cyclosporiasis is an infection of the intestines caused by a parasite. It is not spread directly from person-to-person. The parasite can infect someone by entering the body through the mouth, typically by eating or drinking something that is contaminated with cyclospora, which infects the intestines and usually causes watery diarrhea. Other symptoms can include loss of appetite, weight loss, bloating, increased gas, stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, muscle aches, low-grade fever, and fatigue. The illness can be severe, but it is not typically considered life-threatening. Symptoms usually appear within one week after exposure. If not treated, the illness can last from a few days to a month or longer. Individuals with cyclosporiasis symptoms are encouraged to contact a healthcare provider. In another development, the CDC also reported 2,318 confirmed measles cases in the U.S. this year, with the majority of those in 45 jurisdictions, including Virginia, which has reported 177 cases so far. The national number of cases so far this year is a record-breaking figure that already exceeds the annual total from last year.

CMS Issues IPF, SNF, IRF Prospective Payment System Final Rules

This week, the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** (CMS) issued final rules to update Medicare payment policies and rates for inpatient psychiatric facilities (IPF), skilled nursing facilities (SNF), and inpatient rehabilitation facilities (IRF) under the prospective payment system (PPS) for fiscal year (FY) 2027. The IPF PPS final rule updates payment rates by 2.3 percent, based on the 2021-based IPF market basket increase of 3.2 percent less a 0.9 percentage point productivity adjustment. CMS indicated that total estimated payments to IPFs would increase by 2.3 percent, or $60 million, in FY 2027, relative to IPF payments in FY 2026. CMS also finalized updates SNF PPS rates by 2.4 percent based on the final SNF

market basket of 3.3 percent, reduced by a 0.9 percent productivity adjustment, for an estimated increase of $882.74 million in aggregate payments to SNFs. The SNF final rule also includes updates to certain data submission standards. The IRF PPS final rule increases payments by 2.3 percent, including a 3.2 percent market basket update reduced by a 0.9 percentage point productivity adjustment. CMS also updated the outlier threshold. And the agency finalized two changes to IRF coverage requirements related to therapies initiated within 36 hours of IRF admission and timing standards for holding initial interdisciplinary team meetings. Read more on the final rules here, here, and here.

VDH Encourages Hospital Responses to CDC Maternity Practice, Infant Nutrition Survey by Sept. 10

The **Virginia Department of Health** (VDH) is encouraging Virginia hospitals to participate in the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC) Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. The survey helps hospitals assess what they can do to foster a breastfeeding-friendly environment. Survey questions focus on specific parts of the hospital maternity care that affect how babies are fed, such as breastfeeding, using formula to feed healthy newborns, and feeding routines. The survey deadline is Sept. 10. At present, 38 percent of Virginia hospitals have responded to the survey. The survey is administered by a CDC contractor, Abt Global, which contacts hospitals by e-mail and phone. Read more about the survey here. Questions may be directed to mPINC@cdc.gov.

VDH Shares 'Roadmap' to Enhance Nursing Home Regulatory Oversight

This week, the **Virginia Department of Health** (VDH) and its **Office of Licensure and Certification** (OLC) announced the implementation of a "roadmap" to strengthen regulatory oversight for nursing homes through a process involving facility recertification inspections and compliance investigations. Plan goals are focused on stabilizing long-term care survey operations, reducing the nursing facility recertification backlog, standardizing the enforcement decision-making processes, and constructing internal infrastructure to sustain these gains over the long term. VDH said that implementation will occur in three phases and that guidelines on nursing home oversight and long-term care facilities are focused on resident, health, safety, and quality or care, among other factors.

Events

VHHA to Host Aug. 6 Webinar to Preview Virginia Child Care Cost-Sharing Pilot Program

VHHA, in partnership with the **Virginia Early Childhood Foundation**, is set to host a webinar at 1 p.m. on Aug. 6 focused on upcoming opportunities for hospitals to establish public-private partnerships to support childcare in their communities. During the **Virginia General Assembly** 2026 legislative session, legislation was approved to establish the Employee Child Care Assistance Pilot Program and $25 million in state funding is available to establish and support public-private childcare partnership pilots for Virginia employers participating in a cost-share model. This webinar will explore how hospitals can become early adopters of a public-private model in which the state, employers, and families share the cost of childcare to increase childcare access and improve affordability. Register for the webinar here. The webinar will be recorded and made available to registrants.

Virtual Sessions on Hospital Requirement to Report Sickle Cell Diagnoses Set for August

State law requires hospitals, health clinics, and independent laboratories to report patients diagnosed with sickle cell disease to the Virginia Statewide Sickle Cell Disease (SSCD) Registry. The **Virginia Department of Health** (VDH) is now expanding statewide implementation of the registry and has informed healthcare providers of the obligation to begin consistently reporting applicable patient data by August 2026, including eligible cases dating back to July 1, 2024. VDH has scheduled an informational webinar on Aug. 6 at 4 p.m. Virtual technical assistance sessions will be hosted on Aug. 11 at 4 p.m., Aug. 19 at noon, and Aug. 27 at 4 p.m. Questions regarding the registry or reporting requirements can be directed to sicklecellregistry@vdh.virginia.gov.

Registration Open for the Virginia Behavioral Health Summit on Sept. 24 in Richmond

Registration is now open for the **2026 Virginia Behavioral Health Summit**, which is scheduled for Sept. 24 at The Westin-Richmond. The theme for this year's Summit is "Innovating with Purpose: Building a Resilient Behavioral Health System." The annual Summit is a daylong event that brings together providers, patient advocates, administrators, policymakers, and other stakeholders to explore practical strategies for strengthening behavioral healthcare across the Commonwealth. Summit sessions will focus on topics including behavioral health treatment, workforce and wellbeing initiatives, patient and staff safety, crisis response, and innovative approaches to care delivery. Register for the Summit here.

Save the Date for the Virginia Hospital Leaders Summit in November

As VHHA continues to celebrate its 100th anniversary this year, plans are underway for the **2026 Virginia Hospital Leaders Summit**, whose theme is "100 Years Strong: Honoring Our Past. Shaping the Future." For a century, Virginia's hospitals and health systems have served as the heartbeat of communities, providing compassionate care and leading through times of challenge and opportunity. From Nov. 4-6 at The Omni Homestead Resort, VHHA and hospital officials from across the Commonwealth will gather to celebrate a century of service, honor the leaders who have shaped healthcare in Virginia, and look ahead to the next 100 years. Mark your calendar today. Registration information will be available soon.

DMAS, DSS to Host Aug. 13 Virtual Town Hall on H.R. 1 Changes Related to Medicaid and Non-Citizens

The **Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services** (DMAS) and the **Virginia Department of Social Services** (DSS) are hosting a virtual town hall at noon on Aug. 13 regarding changes to Medicaid under H.R. 1 of 2025 that may impact non-citizens. H.R. 1 is the budget reconciliation package of 2025 known as the One Big Beautiful Bill. It cuts nearly $1 trillion in Medicaid funding over a decade and makes changes to enrollment and eligibility standards. The upcoming virtual session will provide an overview of the changes that will take effect in October 2026, which include updates related to non-citizen eligibility, what these changes may mean for Medicaid members, and where to find additional information and resources. Use this link to join the virtual session.

Podcast

VHHA *Patients Come First* Podcast Features Leader with VCU Center for Human-Animal Interaction

This episode of VHHA's *Patients Come First* podcast features a conversation with **Nancy Gee**, PhD, Director of the **VCU Center for Human-Animal Interaction**. She joins us for a conversation about her work, the impact of therapy dogs in mental health, and much 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

Dr. Richard Sterling, MD, MSc, has been named the inaugural Assistant Dean for Clinical Research in the Office of Research at the **VCU School of Medicine**. In this role, Dr. Sterling will serve as Medical Director of the Clinical Research Office, providing faculty leadership in scientific integrity, regulatory compliance, and resource advocacy. This new position underscores the school's commitment to strengthening clinical research infrastructure, expanding clinical trials, and fostering a culture of excellence, collaboration, and integrity. Dr. Sterling will maintain his roles as a tenured professor of medicine and section chief of hepatology, medical director of viral hepatitis, associate chair for research in the Department of Internal Medicine, and chief medical officer for the VCU Stravitz-Sanyal Institute for Liver Disease and Metabolic Health.

Victoria L. Tiase, PhD, RN, FAMIA, FNAP, FAAN, FAHSE, NI-BC, is the recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award, the highest alumni honor from the **UVA School of Nursing**. A nationally recognized nurse informaticist, educator, and researcher, Tiase has dedicated her career to advancing healthcare through technology, innovation, and policy, helping shape the future of nursing and improving care for patients and clinicians alike. Dr. Tiase's national leadership includes service on the boards of the Alliance for Nursing Informatics, AMIA, and Friends of the National Institute of Nursing Research, as well as editorial board appointments with JAMIA and npj Health Systems. She was appointed as the informatics expert to the National Academy of Medicine's Future of Nursing 2030 Committee, where she helped envision how nurses can use technology to address health disparities and strengthen community health. Tiase is Assistant Professor of Biomedical Informatics and Nursing at the University of Utah. Read more here.