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Communications

Site Visits Continue!

The coalition offers site visits to all members annually. These non-punitively visits review emergency operations plans, identify best practices in planning bring the wealth of the region's planning knowledge directly to the staff. The meetings are open to emergency managers and health district planners, last no more than an hour and can be scheduled between July and April of each fiscal year. If interested in participating, contact Amy Green, Medically Vulnerable Populations Coordinator, at agreen@vaems.org.

Long Term Care Focus Group

The Long Term Care Focus Group is excited to offer our members a hybrid (in person and virtual) meeting option this fiscal year. Each quarter we will offer an in person option for discussing pressing topics in emergency operations, planning opportunities and resources. This collaborative group dives into preparedness from the lens of Long Term Care organizations in our region. We encourage organizations such as assisted living facilities, home health, hospice, dialysis and the like to get involved in this amazing group. The next meeting will take place **February 2, 2023 starting at 9AM**. To get your invitation please register using the following [link](#) or contact Amy Green at agreen@vaems.org.

ESRD Emergency Hub

The ESRD Emergency Hub is designed to help people with kidney disease who are on dialysis or have received a transplant prepare for and stay safe during an emergency. Access free resources and tools created by kidney care and emergency management experts. Easily create, store, and find your treatment information, emergency resources and needed phone numbers for treatment centers and support organization. Receive critical information in real time based from trusted resources including your ESRD Network. Download the app or watch a video to learn more. Visit esrdemergencyhub.ipro.org.

Emergency Operations Planning

***NEW* Coalition Charter and Bylaws Review**

Recently the Board of Directors met to discuss needed updates to the Coalition Charter and Bylaws. Those changes are highlighted in the proposed draft. Please review. If you have any



questions, comments, concerns, and/or suggested edits, please submit them to Carolyn Malloy @ cmalloy@vaems.org by COB January 20, 2023. Those questions, comments, concerns, and/or suggested edits will be presented at the next board meeting on January 27, 2023. The document can be found attached to the email that delivered this copy of the EVHC Ready.

***NEW* Regional Healthcare Coordination Center (RHCC) Activation**

The Regional Healthcare Coordination Center (RHCC) is a result of the collaboration of healthcare entities in the eastern region of Virginia. The RHCC is designed to provide mutual aid to EVHC members. The RHCC is able to provide alerts when a member organization suffers an operational problem or disaster using the Virginia Healthcare Alerting and Status System (VHASS). Once a VHASS event is created it will notify members of the effect to healthcare delivery in the region. RHCC can provide data to support healthcare response and recovery operations.

For more information regarding the RHCC and VHASS, contact the EVHC Program Office at (757) 963-0632 or via e-mail at evhc@vaems.org.

To activate the RHCC call (844) 757-7422.

Winter Weather Preparedness

Here are several quick steps to take to keep safe this winter.

- Have an emergency kit prepared with supplies such as an alternate fuel source for heating your home, flashlights and batteries in your home and car, blankets, food that needs no cooking or refrigeration, a 3-day supply of water, prescription medicines, a battery operated radio and flashlights, battery powered cell phone chargers, snow shovel etc. Learn more about preparing a winter preparedness plan by visiting, www.readyvirginia.gov.
- Winterize homes by insulating walls and attics, caulking and weather-stripping doors and windows. In addition, if using woodstoves or fireplaces to heat, remember to have them professionally serviced and cleaned.
- Check batteries in smoke detectors and carbon monoxide monitors.
- Prepare vehicles with emergency supplies and have maintenance service as often as the manufacturer recommends.

Follow this [link](#) for more information.





Emergency Psychiatric Care That Finally Works for Patients Source

According to the Alameda Health System, up to 15% of emergency department visits now involve behavioral health emergencies, including substance use and mental health crises. Yet in managing these patients, too many hospitals adhere to historically inefficient care models that benefit few—and may actually cause patients’ symptoms to worsen. To improve emergency psychiatric care, we must first challenge the assumption that most behavioral health patients require inpatient admission as their disposition. Experience at Vituity suggests that with urgent interventions, as many as 80% of patients in behavioral health crisis can be stabilized and returned home or to outpatient care within 24 hours (that is, in less time than many are sitting waiting in EDs today). Follow this [link](#) for more information.

Active Shooter Planning and Response in a Healthcare Setting

According to Healthcare and Public Health Sector Coordinating Council, active shooter events in a healthcare setting present unique challenges: a potentially large vulnerable population, hazardous material (including infectious disease), locked units, special challenges (such as weapons and Magnetic Response Imaging (MRI) machines, as well as caregivers who can respond to treat victims. There is no single method to response to an incident, but prior planning will allow you and your staff to choose the best option during an active shooter situation, with the goal of maximizing lives saved. The best way to save lives is to remove potential targets from the shooter’s vicinity. The article addresses some difficult choices that will need to be made in this document. Follow this [link](#) for more information.

Preparedness and Readiness

***NEW* 2022 National Preparedness Report**

The “2022 National Preparedness Report” summarizes progress made, and challenges that remain, in building and sustaining the capabilities needed to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from the threats, hazards and incidents that pose the greatest risk to the nation. For this report, FEMA examined the incidents of 2021 to draw broader conclusions about national risk and capability gaps and identified management opportunities to build those capabilities and reduce risk. This annual report offers all levels of government, tribes, the private and nonprofit sectors, and the public practical insights into preparedness that support decisions about program priorities, resource allocations, and actions that can create more resilient communities. For more information please utilize the following [link](#).





***NEW* Virginia Emergency Management Symposium**

The Virginia Emergency Management Symposium is an annual event that is co-sponsored by the Virginia Emergency Management Association and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management. The Symposium provides a forum to discuss current trends and topics and share information about the latest tools and technology in emergency management and homeland security. Sessions encourage stakeholders at all levels of government, the private sector, public health and related professions to exchange ideas and collaborate to protect lives and property from disaster.

The theme for 2023 is "Change? Challenge Accepted!" and was chosen because, emergency managers in all sectors and at every level have shown what it means to be resilient, by applying lessons learned from the response to the pandemic and other incidents and subsequently changing the way emergency management functions across the board. For more information please utilize the following [link](#).

Push for Emergency Declaration amid Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

“On behalf of America’s pediatricians and children’s hospitals, we ask you to declare an emergency to support the national response to the alarming surge of pediatric hospitalizations due to pediatric respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and influenza along with the continuing children’s mental health emergency. The confluence of these capacity issues in pediatric hospitals and communities requires nimbleness and flexibilities that can only be provided through a Presidential declaration of an emergency under the Stafford Act or National Emergencies Act and a Public Health Emergency declaration. These flexibilities have been provided under COVID-19 and were critical during the height of the surge and ongoing fluctuations of the virus. Children and children’s providers require the same capacity support as they strive to keep up with increasing needs of our youngest Americans.” To read the letter in its entirety please utilize the following [link](#).

National Weather Service Briefs

EVHC is encouraging all facilities to sign up for National Weather Service delivered weekly directly to you. Please note these weekly briefings will be suspended during times when NWS delivers other weather specific briefings focusing on high impact weather events (e.g. severe weather and coastal storms).

To sign up:

- Gather all email addresses for your organization that need to receive NWS briefings.



- Email your list to AKQ-REPORT@NOAA.GOV
- Include “NWS Wakefield Weekly Briefing Signup” in subject line.

Wakefield NWS will process these requests and you should begin receiving the briefings within 3-5 business days.

Hazard Vulnerability Assessment Workshop

These workshops review the purpose and function of the Kaiser Permanente Hazard Vulnerability Assessment. The next workshop will take place virtually on January 19, 2023, at 9 AM. Please register by following this [link](#) or email Amy Green at agreen@vaems.org.

2023 Preparedness Summit

The 2023 Preparedness Summit is scheduled for April 24-27, 2023, in Atlanta. The 2023 theme, “Recover. Renew: Reprioritizing All-Hazards Preparedness,” will provide an opportunity to revisit pressing issues in preparedness and share resources, shape policies, and build skills to mitigate a variety of threats. More information about the event is available on the [Preparedness Summit website](#).

Regulatory News and Updates

***NEW* EMTALA Micro Training**

The Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA) provides that any individual who presents to a covered hospital’s emergency department and requests examination or treatment will be provided an appropriate medical screening examination to determine if an emergency medical condition exists. If an emergency medical condition is found to exist, the hospital must offer either stabilizing treatment or an appropriate transfer to another hospital that has the capabilities to provide stabilizing treatment. Emergency medical conditions can include reproductive health-related conditions. In circumstances in which the appropriate stabilizing treatment is care that could fall under a definition of abortion, the hospital is required to offer that stabilizing treatment irrespective of any directly conflicting state laws. For additional information, see CMS’ guidance: QSO-22-22-Hospitals, Revised 8/25/2022. For more information please utilize the following [link](#).



Outbreaks of Nontuberculous Mycobacteria Infections Highlight Importance of Maintain and Monitoring Dental Waterlines

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is issuing this Health Alert Network (HAN) Health Advisory to emphasize the importance of following existing recommendations for maintaining and monitoring dental waterlines. Multiple outbreaks of nontuberculous Mycobacteria (NTM) infections have occurred in children who received pulpotomies in pediatric dental clinics where the dental treatment water contained high levels of bacteria. CDC provides guidelines on infection control in dental settings which contain recommendations to treat dental unit waterlines and monitor water quality. Dental providers should be familiar with these recommendations on how to properly maintain and monitor their dental equipment to ensure that dental treatment water is safe for patient care. For more information please utilize the following [link](#).

Exercises and Training

***NEW* Exercise and Training Coordinator Position**

The Tidewater EMS Council is accepting applications for the position of Training & Exercise Coordinator for the Eastern Virginia Healthcare Coalition (evhc.org) until January 20, 2023. The Coalition's Training and Exercise Coordinator supports and enhances regional healthcare system emergency preparedness through the execution of training and exercises. Responsible for developing, planning, coordinating, and implementing a multi-year training and exercise plan. The objective of this plan is to ensure healthcare system readiness during and following disasters involving the healthcare community. This includes the development of relevant training and educational materials, workshops, drills, and exercises to test emergency operations plans and response capabilities. Exercises will be developed and conducted in compliance with the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP). The Coordinator will be responsible for completing projects and deliverables required by VHHA, VDH, and the HPP Grant requirements. For more information, please use the following [link](#).

Upcoming Training

VHASS Events Calendar

As the Virginia Healthcare Emergency Management Program (VHEMP) continues to develop and deploy statewide training and education offerings – we redesigned our [Events Calendar](#) (<https://vhass.org/events/>) on the [VHASS.org](#) website to provide a consistent location to market these opportunities.

The redesigned page includes multiple view options (list, month, day), keyword search box, search by date feature, preview and full detail display capabilities, as well as a “subscribe to calendar” feature which provides the ability to import the VHEMP Events calendar to your work or personal calendars. Please see the attached images for illustration.

Infection Control

Virginia Daily COVID-19 Cases and Testing Count

Total Cases: 2,213,867 Death: 22,687

Source: Virginia Department of Health. VDH is closely monitoring and investigating cases of the novel coronavirus in the Commonwealth and Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C). Follow [link](#) for more detailed information. (Data as of January 4, 2023)

Virginia Daily Vaccine

Total Doses Administered: 18,170,890 Fully Vaccinated: 6,322,580

% of Population Fully Vaccinated: 73.6%

People with Booster/Third Dose: 5,142,379

Source: Virginia Department of Health. People vaccinated with two doses of 2-dose vaccine or a one dose of a single dose vaccine are included. Follow [link](#) for more detailed information. (Data as of January 4, 2023)

COVID-19 VHHA – Hospital COVID Data

Currently Hospitalized: 1136

Hospitalized in the ICU with confirmed COVID positive test: 134

Source: Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association. VHASS status board data is used at the state level for COVID surge modeling and emergency management. Follow this [link](#) for more detailed information. (Data as of January 4, 2023)

CMS Urges Timely Patient Access to COVID-19 Vaccines, Therapeutics

CMS is also reemphasizing the need for providers and suppliers to stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations, including any updated COVID vaccines, as they provide the best defense against severe illness, hospitalization, and death from the virus.



CMS is encouraging nursing homes, in particular, to increase their vaccination efforts and review and reinforce their infection control protocols. CMS requires nursing homes to educate residents and staff on the risks and benefits of the COVID vaccines and offer to administer the vaccine. In addition, in consultation with their physician and family, nursing homes should ensure residents who test positive for COVID-19 receive appropriate treatments. For more information please utilize the following [link](#).

NEW Virginia Department of Health Announces Availability of Bivalent COVID-19 Vaccines for Pediatric Patients Ages Six Months and Older

Parents of young children in Virginia are now able to seek a free bivalent pediatric COVID-19 vaccine for their children aged six months and older, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) announced today, following the recommendation of the vaccines by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on December 9. Both bivalent vaccines target the original strain of the SARS-CoV-2 virus that first emerged in Wuhan, China in late 2019 and the BA.4 and BA.5 subvariants of the Omicron variant that emerged in the United States in November 2021.

VDH advises parents to discuss this option with their child's healthcare provider. Vaccination opportunities may be found at [Vaccinate.Virginia.gov](https://www.vaccinate.virginia.gov). Information about all the COVID-19 vaccines authorized for administration in the U.S. is available at the VDH COVID-19 vaccine website. The Vaccinate Virginia Call Center is an additional source of information; call (877) VAX-IN-VA – (877) 829-4682 – Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Information is available in English, Spanish and more than 100 other languages. TTY users should call 7-1-1. Follow this [link](#) for more information.

U.S. Monkeypox Outbreak 2022: Situation Summary

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention is urging healthcare providers in the U.S. to be alert for patients who have rash illnesses [consistent with monkeypox](#), regardless of whether they have travel or specific risk factors for monkeypox and regardless of gender or sexual orientation. CDC is working with state and local health officials to identify people who may have been in contact with individuals who have tested positive for monkeypox, so they can [monitor their health](#). Follow this [link](#) for more information ([Signs and Symptoms](#)). ([Outbreak Map](#)).

NEW Increase in Pediatric Invasive Group A Streptococcal Infections

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is issuing this Health Alert Network (HAN) Health Advisory to notify clinicians and public health authorities of a recent increase in pediatric invasive group A streptococcal (iGAS) infections. In November 2022, CDC was



notified of a possible increase in iGAS infections among children at a hospital in Colorado. Potential increases in pediatric iGAS cases in other states were subsequently noted by contributors to the Infectious Diseases Society of America's provider-based Emerging Infections Network and by certain jurisdictions participating in CDC's Active Bacterial Core Surveillance System (ABCs). This increased number of pediatric iGAS cases in some jurisdictions has occurred in the setting of increased circulation of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), influenza viruses, SARS-CoV-2, and other respiratory viruses. While the overall number of cases has remained relatively low and iGAS infections remain rare in children, CDC is investigating these reports. Follow this [link](#) for more information.

Resources

Sentinel XL S-3000 PAPR Units

EVHC is offering ILC Dover Sentinel XL HP PAPR Systems to members free of charge. This is a blower-assisted air purifying respirator that includes a head cover, battery pack, hoses and other components. Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) Conversion kits are also available for the PAPR units. If you have interest please contact Ben Cibock, EVHC Inventory and Management Specialist at bcibock@vaems.org.

Personal Protection Equipment

If anyone is in need of PPE as they continue COVID response efforts, contact Ben Cibock, EVHC Inventory and Management Specialist at bcibock@vaems.org. Items provided would be at no cost to our members.

- N-95 Mask
 - Face Shields
 - Hair Covers
 - Shoe Covers
 - Adult Surgical Masks
 - Isolation Gowns
 - Lysol Wipes
-

***NEW* Improving Access to Influenza Countermeasures for U.S. Jurisdictions**

Jurisdictions should work with their [ASPR Regional Teams \(Region 3\)](#) to initiate any requests for Tamiflu through the SNS. HHS is committed to ensuring that jurisdictions receive the assistance they need without affecting our nation's preparedness for a potential pandemic flu.



EVHC READY
The Eastern Region's Pulse On Healthcare Emergency Preparedness



January 2023

To determine the expiration date for extended but not relabeled Tamiflu products, find the lot number on the product label and refer to the table using this [link](#) to identify the corresponding expiration date.

