

Virginia Task Force on Primary Care SFY'26 Annual Report

Background:

A robust primary care infrastructure is associated with increased life expectancy, fewer avoidable emergency department visits, fewer preventable inpatient admissions, higher vaccination rates, and better overall population health. Primary care faced serious challenges before COVID, but the pandemic brought these issues to light and, in fact, made them much worse. The multi-stakeholder Virginia Task Force on Primary Care (VTFPC) was launched to address real concerns about primary care sustainability.

In state fiscal year 2026, the VTFPC hosted the [Primary Care Summit](#), launched the [Research Consortium](#), piloted three programs ([Person-Centered Primary Care Measure](#), [Primary Pathways](#), and [Joy in Healthcare](#)), and produced four tools ([Legislative Trackers](#), [AI Learning Stream](#), [Behavioral Health Care Manager Handbook](#) and [Payment Maximization Toolkit](#)) and two reports (Primary Care [Investment Report](#) and [Scorecard](#)). The VTFPC has also prepared a [workplan and recommendations for SFY '27](#).

Primary Care Summit

On October 8th, 2025, the VTFPC hosted its first Primary Care Summit, convening over 100 healthcare leaders to discuss the future of primary care in Virginia. Participants met to learn about the current state of primary care in Virginia, gain deeper insights into patient and community experiences, and identify and expand opportunities to advance innovative payment reforms and strengthen the primary care workforce. The event concluded with a forward-looking conversation on emerging state legislative priorities and building a unified voice to sustain primary care in Virginia. See the full event agenda, speakers, sponsors, and photos at <https://www.vahealthinnovation.org/virginia-primary-care-summit-2025/>.

Research Consortium Launch

The Research Consortium @ VCHI was established to address a consensus recommendation of the VTFPC. It is designed to inform state health policy through timely, actionable research, leveraging numerous existing partnerships and building new connections across the Commonwealth. It was officially launched on October 7th, 2025, with a celebratory event at the Branch Museum of Design in Richmond. More than 100 representatives from industry, academia, state government, and data organizations gathered to recognize this milestone in strengthening Virginia's capabilities for streamlined, evidence-based, actionable health policy research. The Consortium launched with \$500,000 in seed funding from the General Assembly. Learn more about the launch of the Research Consortium at <https://www.vahealthinnovation.org/research-consortium-launch-event/>.

Consortium Grants and Partnerships

The Consortium launched with multiple key partnerships and grants. In SFY '26, the Research Consortium @ VCHI:

- Secured an RWJF Health Data 4 Action grant, "Examining Negotiated Rates for Behavioral Health and Primary Care Providers" in partnership with William & Mary and George Mason University. Includes a partnership with Mathematica to use its Transparency in Coverage (TiC) data. <https://www.vahealthinnovation.org/research-consortium-grants/>
- Began evaluation of the Primary Pathways pilot in partnership with the University of Virginia, College of William & Mary, and Community Health Solutions. <https://www.vahealthinnovation.org/primary-pathways/>

- Partnered with Epic to be the first state in the country to use its Cosmos population health data to develop statewide reports. <https://www.vahealthinnovation.org/research-consortium-data-partners/>
- Named as the lead evaluator on Virginia's Rural Health Transformation Program to produce the independent evaluation of the overall program and measure progress toward statewide goals. <https://www.vahealthinnovation.org/rural-health-transformation/lead-evaluator/>

Pilots

I. *Person-Centered Primary Care Measure*

The Person-Centered Primary Care Measure (PCPCM) is an 11-item patient-reported measure that assesses primary care aspects rarely captured, yet thought responsible for primary care effects on population health, equity, quality, and sustainable expenditures. Before Virginia health plans will consider using this measure as part of value-based payment contracting, they requested an implementation pilot and evaluation.

In SFY'26, our PCPCM pilot enlisted Carilion Clinic, Fortify Children's Health, and VCU Health to engage in survey distribution. These sites encompassed 861 clinicians at 78 practice locations, with 223 clinicians gathering the specified minimum 30 completed survey responses. A total of 20,848 PCPCM patient surveys were collected.

VCHI is now contracting with the Larry A. Green Center for pilot evaluation and dissemination of findings. Three papers are underway: 1) PCPCM and the All-Payer Claims Database, 2) PCPCM and Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) What Matters Index (WMI), and 3) PCPCM and case mix. Learn more about the PCPCM pilot and evaluation at <https://www.green-center.org/pcpcm>.

II. *Primary Pathways*

Primary Pathways is a multi-payer alignment pilot to expand and support pediatric practices in caring for the behavioral health needs of their patients. Participating health plans include Anthem and Sentara Medicaid managed care organizations (MCOs). The pilot includes 34 practice sites with 202 primary care providers, 16 behavioral health providers, and 16,000 Medicaid members.

All practices participating from the onset have reached Tier 3, the most integrated and highest paying status. Both health plans have signed on to continue their participation in 2027. A qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the pilot is also underway, and it will be complete in December of 2027. Learn more about *Primary Pathways: Paving the Way for Behavioral Health Integration* at <https://www.vahealthinnovation.org/primary-pathways/>.

III. *Joy in Healthcare*

Virginia Joy in Healthcare is a statewide, first-in-the-nation, multi-organization partnership to better understand and address the causes of clinician burnout and impediments to well-being, particularly as they relate to the provision of primary care. Large health care entities participate in the AMA's Joy in Medicine Health System Recognition Program and implement programs and policies that actively support well-being so clinicians and their patients can thrive. Instead of seeing retention as a solo enterprise or even a competition across organizations, the participants have agreed to conduct organizational surveys with the same set of standard questions so that each organization can understand where it stands in terms of provider well-being and the state can see and respond to data from across the Commonwealth.

In September 2025, five Virginia Joy in Healthcare participants (Ballad Health, Bon Secours Richmond, Carilion Clinic, Centra Health, and Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters) were recognized by the AMA's Joy in Medicine Program with Bronze level achievement. In 2026, two more joined them in receiving

Bronze level recognition (Trusted Doctors, VCU Health). Learn more about the Joy in Healthcare pilot at <https://www.vahealthinnovation.org/virginia-joy-in-healthcare/>.

The VTFPC published *Insights from Virginia's Joy in Healthcare Initiative* on February 9th, 2026. The report aggregates survey data collected at the organizational level to explore combined findings for the Commonwealth. Read *Advanced Practice Provider Burnout in Primary Care: Insights from Virginia's Joy in Healthcare Initiative* at <https://www.vahealthinnovation.org/virginia-joy-in-healthcare/app-burnout-in-primary-care-2026/>.

Tools

I. Primary Care Legislative Tracker

In 2026, the Virginia Primary Care Bill and Budget Amendment Trackers followed 50 primary care-related bills and 33 primary care-related budget amendments. The trackers are updated on a weekly basis, along with written updates at key points throughout the session. To download the primary care legislative trackers, join the Virginia Primary Care Innovation Hub and visit <https://pcinnovationhub.mn.co/posts/legislative-trackers-2026-tracking-tools>.

II. AI Learning Stream

The AI Learning Stream shares insights and ideas for using AI in primary care. AI is evolving as a game changer for primary care, and this is reflected in the growing stream of articles, webinars, CME activities, courses, and other AI resources. It takes time to track these resources across multiple channels. The AI Learning Stream is a space to quickly check what is new across multiple core resources; it does not track new vendor products or recommend any vendor products. To view the AI Learning Stream, join the Virginia Primary Care Innovation Hub and visit <https://pcinnovationhub.mn.co/posts/ai-learning-stream-introduction>.

III. Behavioral Health Care Manager Handbook

Through the Primary Pathways pilot, VCHI collaborated with the Robert Graham Center, Community Health Solutions, and the University of Virginia DNP program to develop the Behavioral Health Care Manager Handbook. The guide was developed to support Care Managers working in pediatric primary care settings where behavioral health is integrated into routine care. Its purpose is to offer practical, evidence-informed guidance that aligns with real-world workflows, recognizes variation across practices, and supports Care Managers in coordinating behavioral health services effectively. The Behavioral Health Care Manager Handbook is currently a working draft employed by care managers at participating Primary Pathways practices.

IV. Behavioral Health Payment Maximization Toolkit

Through the Primary Pathways pilot, VCHI collaborated with the Robert Graham Center, Community Health Solutions, and the University of Virginia to develop the Behavioral Health Payment Maximization Toolkit. The toolkit includes a dashboard on financial sustainability and an integrated behavioral health billing code advisor. The Behavioral Health Payment Maximization Toolkit is currently a working draft in review by billing specialists at participating Primary Pathways practices.

Reports and Scorecards

I. Primary Care Investment Report

The VTFPC publishes an annual report on primary care investment trends in the Commonwealth. The 2026 edition expands upon prior reports to provide a more comprehensive assessment. Drawing on Virginia All-Payer Claims Database (APCD) data from 2019 through 2024, the report examines trends in primary care spending, utilization and continuity of care, workforce composition, and geographic variation across domains. Read the 2026 Virginia Primary Care Investment Report at

<https://www.vahealthinnovation.org/virginia-primary-care-investment-report-2026/>.

II. Primary Care Scorecard

The Virginia Primary Care Scorecard monitors key indicators of primary care investment, utilization, workforce, outcomes, and access across the Commonwealth. Together with the Virginia Primary Care Investment Report, the scorecard aims to provide an annual tracking tool to monitor the health and well-being of primary care in Virginia through an interactive exploration of data. Explore the Virginia Primary Care Scorecard Dashboard at <https://www.vahealthinnovation.org/primary-care-scorecard-dashboard-2026/>.

Recommendations and Workplan Items for 2027

Items Recommended for Continuation

- Joy in Healthcare Pilot. Re-enlist current collaborative participants (8) and prepare data analysis and policy recommendations using organizational biopsy data for Virginia.
- Primary Pathways Pilot. Continue with current MCOs (2) and pediatric practices (34).
- Prepare PC Investment Report and Scorecard.

New Efforts Related to Existing Work

- Assess the feasibility of establishing a Virginia-specific alternative to the AMA's Health System Recognition Program that would permit participation by smaller primary care-focused organizations.
- Assess data and prepare recommendations for the continuation of the Primary Pathways and PCPCM pilots.
- Pursue the addition of nonclaims payment data for the Primary Care Investment Report and Scorecard. May require legislative action.

New Work

- Convene a committee to review and disseminate information on Rural Health Transformation opportunities for primary care in Virginia.
- Convene a committee to review and advance primary care payment opportunities and pilots.
- Design approach and begin analysis of patient access/patient engagement challenges with primary care.
- Design and lead multi-state PC ownership assessment.
- Design and begin analysis of PC payment/ money flow assessment.
- Host Virginia Health Policy Research Symposium with a track on primary care.