



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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Senator Janet D. Howell, Chair  
Senate Finance Committee  
P.O. Box 2608  
Reston, VA 20195

Delegate Barry D. Knight, Chair  
House of Appropriations Committee  
1852 Mill Landing Road  
Virginia Beach, VA 23457

Dear Senator Howell and Delegate Knight:

Pursuant to 2022 Special Sessions I Virginia Acts of Assembly Chapter 2, please accept this report as an update on the progress and outcomes of the previously authorized university medical pilots.

The 2019 Virginia Acts of Assembly Chapter 845, Item 390 (R), required the Director of the Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC) to convene a workgroup to be co-chaired by the chief executive officer of the Virginia Commonwealth University Health System (VCUHS), and the executive vice president for health affairs at the University of Virginia Health System (UVA Health) to develop a pilot partnership to provide comprehensive medical care for inmates in at least one state correctional facility. In accordance with the directive, VADOC convened a workgroup that developed a proposal for implementing two pilot projects. The projects included a pilot at the State Farm Correctional Complex and a pilot at the Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women (FCCW).<sup>1,2</sup> VCUHS proposed establishing an onsite orthopedic clinic at the State Farm Complex, while UVA proposed expanding 340B access to hepatitis C treatment at FCCW via telemedicine. Additionally, both university hospital systems participate in the federal 340B drug program, and included provisions in their proposals allowing VADOC to purchase certain high-cost outpatient medications through them at substantial discounts.<sup>3</sup> In November 2019, VADOC submitted the proposal to the Senate Finance and House Appropriations Committees along with a request for funding to implement it. Although the 2020 General Assembly approved the request, the funding was unallotted due to the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and was never restored.

The 2021 Virginia Acts of Assembly, Chapter 552, Item 401, subsection E directs VADOC to continue the workgroup and report annually on the progress and outcomes of the university pilot to the Senate Finance and House Appropriations Committees no later than October 15th of each year.

<sup>1</sup> The scope of the initial university pilot was limited due to the complexity of providing comprehensive medical services in correctional settings. Over time, it was anticipated that the hospital systems would assume responsibility for all medical services at each site.

<sup>2</sup> State Farm Correctional Complex was selected because it served as a hub of VADOC health care services and its location allowed VCUHS to easily organize providers and clinics onsite. Fluvanna Correctional Center was chosen as a site for UVA Health because of the high medical acuity and facility location.

<sup>3</sup> 340B pricing is a federal program that requires drug companies to provide outpatient medications to eligible health care organizations at substantially reduced prices. By serving vulnerable, low-income and uninsured patient populations, the university hospital systems are eligible to receive 340B pricing.

As you are aware, the COVID-19 pandemic caused substantial economic, health, and social disruptions in Virginia. VADOC and its university partners leveraged the challenges brought on by the pandemic to engage in new collaborations while strengthening previously existing ones.<sup>4</sup> It is now in this new landscape of collaboration that the three partners are re-evaluating how best to collaborate on innovative health care projects to ensure the delivery of comprehensive medical services to all VADOC inmates. Thus, the workgroup chairs agree that the initial proposal submitted to the General Assembly in 2019 is no longer the direction for collaboration to occur and the partners will continue to capitalize on work performed to date.

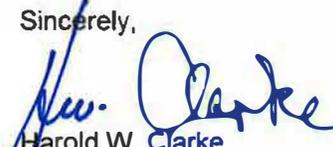
Although the pilots, as proposed, were not funded or implemented, VADOC and the university hospital systems spent the time collaborating on many health care projects. Two projects are especially noteworthy.

First, both universities have worked to expand their treatment capacity for inmates with Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) infection. VCUH actively sees inmates with HCV and higher medical needs for treatment and cure. UVAH has expanded treatment capacity for inmates soon to be releasing from incarceration with existing HCV infection. The UVAH partnership helps ensure releasing inmates are connected to community resources for HCV treatment prior to the individual leaving a VADOC facility.

Second, VADOC partnered with the hospital systems to expand its telemedicine capabilities. While correctional facilities and outside providers were closed during the pandemic, the telemedicine expansion allowed the agency to continue providing specialty care to inmates onsite in lieu of transporting them to either hospital. This greatly benefited all sides. Care provision to VADOC inmates continued with very limited risk of COVID-19 transmission, and allowed both hospitals to use their resources and space to provide care to community members with more critical needs during that time period. Telemedicine expansion will continue between all three partners and is critical for expanding health care access to all VADOC inmates moving forward.

These projects clearly illustrate the ability and willingness of the VADOC, VCUHS, and UVA Health to closely collaborate on projects promoting the delivery of medical care to state inmates. The agency has a strong working relationship with the hospital systems that has proven to be mutually beneficial over the years, particularly during the pandemic, and all three partners anticipate continuing the relationship well into the future.

Please contact me if you have questions this information.

Sincerely,  
  
Harold W. Clarke  
Director

cc: The Honorable Robert Mosier  
The Honorable Dr. Michael Rao  
The Honorable James E. Ryan

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<sup>4</sup> This relationship began in 1979 when VCUHS started providing medical care to state inmates. More recently, UVA Health started providing psychiatric, obstetrical/gynecological, and teleradiology care to inmates at Fluvanna Correctional Center, along with inpatient and outpatient medical care when needed.