



COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER UNIVERSITY



DEVELOPING THE NEXT
GENERATION OF VIRGINIA'S
HEALTH CENTER LEADERS.





ABOUT THE PROGRAM



ADVOCATE™
EDUCATE
ELEVATE



Founded in 2023, the Community Health Center University (CHCU) Leadership Program is a yearlong professional development program hosted by the Virginia Community Healthcare Association (VCHA) in partnership with the University of Richmond.

The program targets emerging leaders from Community Health Centers (CHCs), lookalike centers, and free clinics. Participants gain experience through a curriculum that includes in-person seminars and practical activities. The program cultivates leadership skills in healthcare professionals, helping organizations with growth, succession planning, and overall leadership development. In addition, participants expand their networks to peers with whom they can connect and talk through specific assignments and needs.

"The program has been transformative. I've gained valuable insights into leadership, discovered more about myself, and built a supportive network."

2025 CHCU Participant

ELIGIBILITY & EXPECTATIONS

Applications are open to staff of Virginia FQHCs, lookalikes, and free clinics. As CHCU is a program for emerging leaders, applicants should not be long-tenured members of their organization's C-suite. *(C-suite members new to the FQHC or free clinic space may be considered.)*

Each year, 20 individuals are selected to participate.

Participation requires:

- ✓ One year commitment*
- ✓ Attendance at all in-person learning sessions**
- ✓ Attendance for 10 one-to-one coaching sessions***
- ✓ Completion of a Capstone project
- ✓ April check-in call with VCHA CHCU Director

**The 2027 application period is open
August 14-October 15, 2026.**

**Emergencies (illness, death, etc.) will be reviewed by the program director and excused when applicable.*

***Learning sessions are mandatory. All participants must attend all sessions. Completion of the program is dependent on attendance.*

****All coaching sessions must be attended. If a need arises to cancel/reschedule, 24-hour notice is required to be provided to your coach, and it will be the participant's responsibility to reach out and reschedule. Completion of the program is dependent on 10 sessions of one-to-one coaching.*



2027 SCHEDULE



All sessions are delivered in person on the University of Richmond campus.

**JANUARY
21, 2027**

Orientation & Reception

Objectives:

- Introduction to the program
- Setting up expectations for the year
- Social reception and networking

**JANUARY
22, 2027**

Leading Change

Instructor: Jess Flanigan

Objectives:

- Learn to lead from any position
- Making the transition to leadership
- Learning to communicate effectively in the context of disagreement (conflict)
- Learning to use authority ethically in a way that considers all stakeholders
- Apply leadership principles to relevant case studies

2027 SCHEDULE

FEBRUARY
26, 2027

Leadership Challenges

Instructor: Dr. Angela H. Taylor

Objectives:

- The reality of leading a health center
- Policy issues
- The impact from outside influences that affect health centers
- Navigating the complex challenges faced by health centers
 - Financial instability
 - Workforce shortages
 - Healthcare access barriers
 - Integrating health information technology
 - The complexity of the policy and regulatory landscape affecting health centers
 - Fundraising
 - Leadership

MARCH
19, 2027

Strategic Thinking and Planning

Instructor: Cindy Watts

Objectives:

- Understand the strategic thinking perspective
- Understand its importance to your organization
- Have a general model for creating a strategic plan
- Have a set of resources to help you with a deeper dive
- Considerations to strategic planning – road bumps, detours, and traffic jams
- Outside influences

2027 SCHEDULE

APRIL
16, 2027

Program Evaluation

Instructor: Trina Willard

Objectives:

- Understand basic evaluation concepts
 - Develop practical evaluation skills
 - Use accessible research methods
 - Evaluate health centers program impact
 - Communicate results effectively
 - Understand ethical considerations
 - Support program improvement
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MAY
21, 2027

Introduction to Health Care Compliance and Legal/Ethical Decision-Making

Instructor: Rachel Suddarth

Objectives:

- Understand the HR and Legal perspectives in health centers settings
- Discuss ethical issues and work through practice scenarios
- Understand legal compliance

2027 SCHEDULE

JUNE
25, 2027

Trauma Informed Care and Resilience

Instructor: John Richardson-Lauve

Objectives:

- Understand Trauma Informed Care (TIC) and why it is important in health care.
 - Learn how to work within a TIC Framework, in a HC system
 - Identify and understand resilience
 - Identify and understand the importance of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and how they affect individuals, families, health, and food security
 - Through personal stories, identify resilience and how it can be applied
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JULY
15 & 16,
2027

Part 1: Financial Modeling for Healthcare

Part 2: Budgets and Planning

Thursday Instructor: Saleema Karim

Friday Instructor: Nathan Carroll

Objectives:

- Learn how to plan and budget within a health care environment
- How to budget at every level of leadership
- Understand financial models in health care

2027 SCHEDULE

AUGUST
20, 2027

From Data to Action: Leveraging Data for Decision Making

Instructor: Jim Morrison

Objectives:

- Learn how to find, retrieve, and apply valid data
 - Learn how to use data and metrics to guide decision-making
 - Learn how to apply metrics in daily and overall decision making
 - Understand when data impacts your system negatively and how to address/manage those situations
 - Understand the evolving role of AI and Data
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SEPTEMBER
10, 2027

Communications

Instructors: Amy Armstrong and Sunni Brown

Objectives:

- Learn how to have different types of difficult conversations
- Identify and understand effective advocacy
- Learn how to tailor presentations to differing audiences
- Learn basic guidelines for talking to the press
- Negotiating skill
- Navigating social media
- Select participants will participate in on-camera interviews and receive peer and faculty feedback

2027 SCHEDULE

OCTOBER
8, 2027

Dealing with Disruption

Instructor: Mary Lynn Lunn

Objectives:

- Identify the role of CHC's – Proximity, voice, education, access, care, channel to specialized care, overflow from other providers (Mental Health, SUDs, post-ED care)
- Understand how to work with the constant disruption of staffing issues, financial stress, and the ever-changing, diverse needs of differing populations
- Understand a range of disruptions – pandemic, mass casualty events, mental health crisis, etc
- Understand universal needs
- Create a toolkit/practice model for dealing with disruption, including leadership skills, observational skills, nimbleness, infrastructure, communication, enhanced health care equity, community relationships, financial systems, and payment models
- Understand positive disruption

2027 SCHEDULE

NOVEMBER
12, 2027

Future of Healthcare

Instructor: Rick Mayes

Objectives:

- Understand issues in health care, including Cost Control, “Big Med” and the consequences of integration, consolidation, and private equity in health centers, as well as ways to lead change with this knowledge
- Collective bargaining and strikes among health center workers
- Discover how health centers creatively engage their frontline clinicians to improve performance, morale, and retention
- The importance of value-based care

DECEMBER
9 & 10,
2027

Capstone Presentation & Certificate Ceremony

A celebratory dinner will be held on Thursday evening (location TBD but near U of R). Presentations and the certificate ceremony will be held on Friday on the University of Richmond campus.

All sessions are delivered in person on the University of Richmond campus.