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**For More Information Contact**  
Elizabeth Singer (804) 888-7534

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## **STATE HEALTH COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCES NEW GUIDANCE FOR IMPROVING PATIENT CARE AND SATISFACTION IN HOSPITALS**

**(RICHMOND, Va.)**— State Health Commissioner Karen Remley, M.D., MBA, announced the completion of new guidance intended to assist hospitals wishing to develop policies and procedures for boarding admitted patients. This new guidance is an important tool that will help hospitals in their ongoing efforts to better manage their boarded patients, which will in turn promote improved patient satisfaction and quality of care.

Keeping admitted patients in either the emergency department or some other location of the hospital while awaiting an inpatient bed is often referred to as “boarding.” Boarding begins when an Emergency Physician makes the decision to admit and ends when the patient is placed in an appropriate inpatient unit bed or is delivered to surgical or procedural services.

“Patient boarding is a difficult problem to address. We all agreed that something needed to be done and that simply enacting new laws or regulatory requirements would not be a feasible approach to addressing this issue,” said Dr. Remley.

The VDH Office of Licensure and Certification, the Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association and Virginia College of Emergency Physicians worked together to develop these guidelines. This guidance exemplifies how voluntary effective collaboration between VDH and private healthcare providers supports the needs and well being of patients in Virginia hospitals.

“This is an exciting initiative,” said Dr. Remley. “It’s a great example of the type of collaboration that we are going to continue to need in Virginia as we work to implement the Virginia Health Reform Initiative.” The intent of the Health Care Reform Initiative, established in May, 2010 within the Health and Human Resources Secretariat, is to prepare Virginia for the implementation of federal health reform.