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Virginia hospitals rebound from 2013 financial struggles

By [Nina Flanagan](#) | December 1, 2015 [print](#)

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Dive Brief:

- The Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association launched a campaign this fall to focus on legislative assistance for ongoing financial struggles. **Virginia Health Information** data from 2013 showed 35 hospitals in the state were operating in the red and close to closures.
- However, 2014 data from the same source shows a 37% decrease in hospital deficits from 2013. LifePoint Health System, in SEC filings, reported its six Virginia hospitals accounted for its highest share of revenue in 2014, more than its nine hospitals in Kentucky, a Medicaid expansion state.
- Virginia hospitals earned \$624 million last year versus \$469 million in 2013.

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THE TOP HEALTHCARE

Dive Insight:

Stakeholders point to prudent management, more private coverage via HealthCare.gov, and a strong return on investments for the hospitals' financial boost.

According to [Modern Healthcare](#), this accounts for hospitals in other states without Medicaid expansion that are improving financially. Hospitals in non-expansion states improved their operating margins by 1.3 percentage points last year, but those in expansion states saw only a 0.9 percentage point improvement, as reported in a Moody's Investors Service report.

However, Julian Walker, the Virginia Hospital Association spokesman, [said](#), "While the numbers fluctuate year to year, data from the past several years show that the fundamental trend of hospitals enduring negative operating margins remains a concern in Virginia."

The potential for Medicaid expansion in Virginia dropped recently with GOP victories enabling Republican control of both chambers of the state Legislature. However, Governor Terry McAuliffe (D) said his new strategy would expand Medicaid to 400,000 residents at no cost to the state, as previously reported in [Healthcare Dive](#).

But, it may be difficult to overcome the fact an audit discovered the state wasted at least [\\$21 million](#) on ineligible Medicaid recipients last year.

Recommended Reading

[Modern Healthcare: Virginia hospitals improve finances, lose bargaining chip for Medicaid expansion](#)

[Healthcare Dive: VA wasted at least \\$21M on ineligible Medicaid recipients](#)

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