

<https://thefnp.com/tncms/asset/editorial/851b770d-917a-4c29-a0c8-214425354c90/>

HOT

CEO: Valley Health has made strides in patient satisfaction

By MICKEY POWELL The Winchester Star

Apr 29, 2026



Valley Health President and CEO Mark Nantz speaks during the Business at the Bloom luncheon Wednesday.

MICKEY POWELL/The Winchester Star

Valley Health must change its operations to cope with an expected \$80 million annual loss in Medicaid reimbursements, according to its chief executive.

"We're not going to see the impact immediately," President and CEO Mark Nantz said Wednesday. "But we've got to adjust ... or we're going to be in trouble" financially.

Nantz made the remarks during the annual Business at the Bloom luncheon, where he was the keynote speaker. The event, held inside the Tolley Dental Zone at Shenandoah University's James R. Wilkins Jr. Athletics & Events Center, was part of the 99th Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival.

Winchester-based Valley Health recently announced it will close Winchester Medical Center's patient observation unit and terminate its contracts with Emergency Medicine of Blue Ridge and Sound Physicians, which provide each of its six hospitals with emergency room physicians and hospitalists — doctors who treat inpatients. The health system instead will contract with SCP Health, which will take over the employment of doctors beginning Sept. 30, officials have said.

Nantz didn't address those changes specifically. However, he said the Medicaid cuts, which stemmed from federal legislation adopted last July, prompted consideration of selling Valley Health to another health system or merging with one.

For either option, "we'd (likely) have to relinquish all local control" over hospital operations, Nantz said. "That didn't sit well" with Valley Health leadership.

So "we're going to do this ourselves," he said of weathering the cuts.

Nantz referenced President Franklin D. Roosevelt having once said, "A smooth sea never made a skilled sailor."

"We have a strong, seaworthy ship and skilled navigators" who will help Valley Health get through the tough times, he stressed.

Originally a certified public accountant, Nantz has a bachelor's degree in accounting and a master's degree in health administration. Before coming to Winchester, he was an executive with Bon Secours Mercy Health and the Carolinas Healthcare System, now Advocate Health.

Analytics he presented show Valley Health hospitals have made notable strides in patient satisfaction since the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, during which he joined the health system. He attributes those strides largely to efforts to treat the system's 6,000-plus employees well.

"Teams that take care of each other take better care of other people," said Nantz, adding that "our culture is your care."

Wednesday's event marked the 20th year of the luncheon and an opportunity for business people to network.

Valley Health and the Top of Virginia Regional Chamber were the lead sponsors.

James Imoh, chairman of the chamber's board, said this year's Apple Blossom Festival theme, "Keep Blooming Together," is important because "our nation finds itself somewhat divided. There are a lot of tensions."

Leading the invocation, Imoh prayed that "we come together stronger (as a business community) ... because of the friendships we have" among each other.

— Contact Mickey Powell at mpowell@winchesterstar.com