

Division of Consolidated **Laboratory** Services

Zika, SARS and West Nile are undoubtedly viral menaces. Gasoline, animal feed and fertilizer are seemingly banal products. But across that spectrum, testing — to protect public health — is key. From a state-of-the-art building in Richmond with nearly 200,000 square feet of lab space, the state Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services annually runs tests on about 7 million samples of all types. The agency's numerous scientists are experts in microbiology, immunology, virology, molecular biology and chemistry. The lab, part of the Virginia Department of General Services, is certified to handle such pathogens as anthrax and Ebola, and it has technology not unlike the wizardry highlighted on such detective shows as "CSI" — think mass spectrometry, ion chromatography, whole genome sequencing and molecular fingerprinting. The technologies help the agency in surveillance and tracking of substances that affect our environment, food and bodies.

(804-648-4480; DGS.STATE.VA.US)

Noah's **Children**

The terms "hospice" and "palliative care" aren't whispered anymore, and amid an aging population, end-of-life planning is growing as families discuss quality vs. quantity of life. But seniors aren't the only ones with needs: Tragically, infants may be born sick and die after only days or months, and school-age children may be diagnosed with life-threatening illnesses. Noah's Children, a pediatric hospice and palliative care program for children, was founded 20 years ago by pediatrician Dr. Bob Archuleta, who recognized the special emotional and practical needs of these children and their families. It's the only program of its kind in central Virginia, where an estimated 3,000 to 3,500 children are living with a life-threatening illness or condition and need palliative care. Today, the program is part of Bon Secours Richmond Health System and takes referrals from all area health systems. Caregiving teams can include nurses, social workers, therapists, chaplains and volunteers.

(804-287-7686; NOAHSCHILDREN.ORG)

