

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VA ANNOUNCES ADDITION OF HARU OKUDA, M.D., AS NATIONAL MEDICAL DIRECTOR FOR SIMLEARN

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Haru Okuda, M.D., was recently named National Medical Director for the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Simulation Learning Education and Research Network (SimLEARN) Program. In this role, Dr. Okuda leads a staff of clinical simulationists and educators in conducting research, developing curricula and best practices and coordinating acquisitions of clinical simulation training systems in support of health care providers at VA medical centers nationwide.

“Dr. Haru Okuda is a recognized leader in clinical simulation,” said Dr. Robert A. Petzel, VA’s Under Secretary for Health. “He brings a drive and energy to SimLEARN that will help advance the program’s vision of unparalleled excellence.”

Prior to joining the Department of Veterans Affairs, Dr. Okuda served as the Director and Assistant Vice President of the Institute for Medical Simulation and Advanced Learning for the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation, the largest public health care system in the United States. In that role, he oversaw the construction of a 10,000 square foot, \$10 million simulation center; coordinated the development and implementation of simulation programs in areas such as central line placement, obstetrical emergencies and code team training; and worked to link simulation training with patient safety outcomes for the organization. He was also Associate Clinical Professor of Emergency Medicine at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine and was the former Associate Residency Director in Emergency Medicine and Director of Simulation for the medical school.

Dr. Okuda is the current co-chair of the educational program, Simwars, for this year’s International Meeting on Simulation in Healthcare. Simwars is an inter-disciplinary simulation competition between health care providers that has been held at a number of national meetings, including the American College of Emergency Medicine Scientific Assembly and the Neurocritical Care Society’s Annual Meeting. He is also Immediate Past Chair of the Emergency Medicine Special Interest group for Society for Simulation in Healthcare, and Vice-Chair of the Simulation Academy for the Society for Academic Emergency Medicine.

With numerous publications in the areas of simulation, patient safety and education, Dr. Okuda recently published the textbook "Emergency Medicine Oral Boards Review Illustrated." In 2010, Dr. Okuda was recognized by Crain's New York Business Magazine as a member of its current “40 Under 40” cohort, as well as by Becker’s Hospital Review as a “rising star” on its list of 25 health care leaders under age 40.

Dr. Okuda received his Bachelor of Science degree in Neuroscience from Brown University, his MD from New York Medical College and completed his residency in emergency medicine at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine. He is currently completing a Clinical Quality Fellowship with the Greater New York Hospital Association/United Hospital Fund. He is certified by the American Board of Emergency Medicine.

Sited at VHA's SimLEARN National Simulation Center in Orlando, Fla., the strategy of the SimLEARN program is to improve clinical outcomes for America's Veterans by providing a safe and supportive environment in which practitioners master skills, practice protocols, learn system-based practices, apply critical decision making and promote communication and interpersonal skills. To learn more about the VHA SimLEARN program, visit www.simlearn.va.gov.

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