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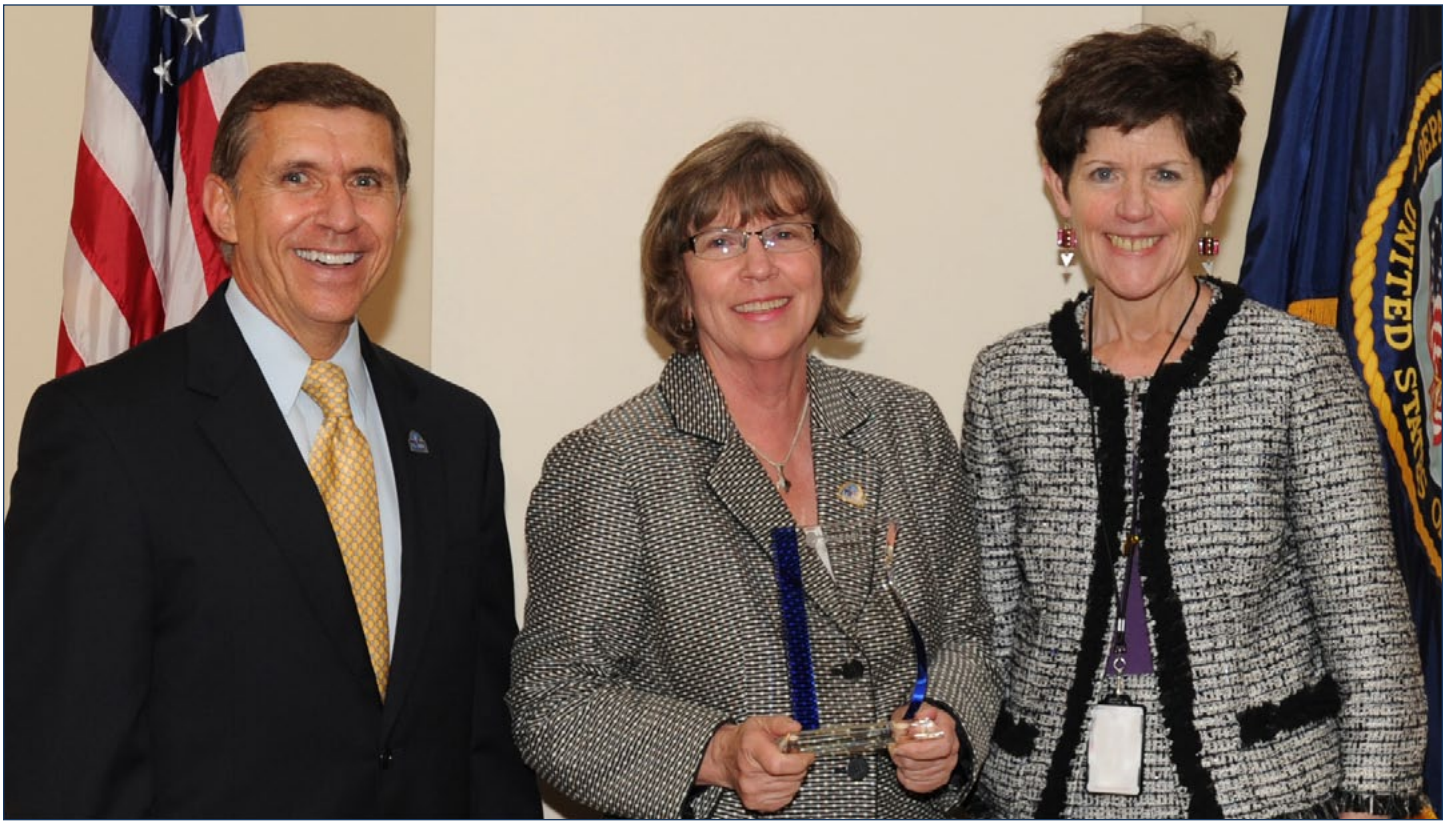
SimLEARN℠
Excellence in Veterans' Healthcare

Newsletter



(Far right) Dr. Carolyn M. Clancy, VA Interim Under Secretary for Health, and Mr. Jose Riojas, VA Chief of Staff, were on hand to present the award to Janet Murphy, who serves as the network director for the VA Midwest Health Care Network in Minneapolis. (VA courtesy photo)

Awards presented to recipients of 2014 Under Secretary for Health's Excellence Awards

By Gerald P. Sonnenberg
EES Marketing and Communication

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Awards were recently presented to the recipients of the VA Under Secretary for Health's Awards for Excellence in Clinical Simulation Training, Education and Research. The awards were established to recognize clinical leaders who have supported and advanced VHA's strategic plan for clinical simulation.

The recipient of the Excellence in Clinical Simulation Training, Education and Research Practice Award is Mary E. Holtschneider, RN-BC, BSN, MPA, NREMT-P, CPLP. Janet Murphy, BA, MBA, was awarded the Clinical Simulation Training, Education and Research Executive Leadership Award.

Holtschneider is the healthcare simulation education coordinator at the Durham VA Medical Center (VAMC) in North Carolina and was presented her award by Dr. Lygia Arcaro, SimLEARN nursing program director.

Holtschneider's work in simulation has led to improved learner competencies and proficiencies in the Durham VA and throughout other VA systems. In addition to collaborating with colleagues to develop and implement a stroke code process which has greatly improved and streamlined the care stroke patients receive at the Durham VAMC, she also contributed to VHA's adoption and use of clinical simulation strategies by providing ongoing consultation to VISN 6 facilities regarding simulation implementation and code response team training programs. She has changed the culture of how these courses are taught, making them more interactive, with online virtual learning modules and multiple simulations that involve personnel from various health care professions.

She is the VISN 6 simulation champion, the champion of the Workgroup for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and

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Code Blue, and is an American Heart Association faculty person for Basic and Advanced Cardiac Life Support classes. Holtschneider lectures to internal VA audiences, as well as externally in her work as an assistant clinical professor at the Duke University School of Nursing, the Duke Area Health Education Center and the North Carolina Nurses Association.

"Receiving this award is a wonderful honor," said Holtschneider. "I am thrilled to be part of the Durham VA Medical Center Simulation Program, and honored to serve with my outstanding simulation team members in Durham, as well as throughout VISN 6. I look forward to working with SimLEARN and others nationally to help move future simulation efforts forward and serve our nation's VA staff and Veterans."

Dr. Carolyn M. Clancy, VA Interim Under Secretary for Health, and Mr. Jose Riojas, VA Chief of Staff, were on hand to present the award to Murphy, who serves as the network director for the VA Midwest Health Care Network in Minneapolis. She has championed clinical simulation in VISN 23 since 2008.

Murphy supported a unique and innovative clinical strategic initiative request which led to the provision of high-fidelity mannequins and clinical simulation instructor training to nine facilities within VISN 23. Her leadership led to the network becoming the VHA model for others searching to create a simulation system process.

Between 2012 and 2013, she supported the acquisition of simulation

(Above left) Mary Holtschneider is the Healthcare Simulation Education Coordinator at the Durham VA Medical Center (VAMC) in North Carolina and was presented her award by Dr. Lygia Arcaro, SimLEARN nursing program director. (VA courtesy photo)

equipment and supplies for 14 locations in the VA Midwest network area of operations. She also supported the creation of a VISN simulation program, including a simulation charter and VISN simulation program coordinator position. The program expanded in 2013, and simulation training initiatives were broadened at 14 VA facilities with 50 simulation specialists. Her leadership and drive led the network to become the VHA model for others searching to create a simulation system process.

"In 2007, I co-sponsored a VISN 23 strategic initiative for VISN-wide simulation-based rapid response and crisis team training and development of a virtual team training module. Little did I know that the demand for clinical simulation training and equipment would grow dramatically, and I would be in a position to support that growth," said Murphy. "I am proud that over 8,000 VISN 23 employees engaged in some form of clinical simulation training in FY2014, and I am gratified to have received this award.

"But credit really goes to all the facility leaders and clinical simulation coordinators in VISN 23 who supported a small idea, continued to advocate for resources and helped us grow a terrific program that is helping improve the quality and safety of care we provide to Veterans," she added.

Other nominees for the ***Excellence in Clinical Simulation Training, Education and Research Practice Award***

- Dr. David Adriansen – Minneapolis Minn., VAMC
- Michael Brin – Denver, Colo., Eastern Colorado Denver VAMC
- Herbert Cooke – Hampton, Va., Hampton VAMC
- Dr. Kathleen Decker – Hampton, Va., Hampton VAMC
- Racquell Garrett – Houston, Texas Michael E. DeBakey VAMC
- Dr. Brian Kaufman – New York City, N.Y., New York Harbor VAMC
- Dr. Stephen Loyd – Mountain Home, Tenn., James H. Quillen VAMC
- Dr. Jutta Novalija – Milwaukee, Wisc., Clement Zablocki VAMC
- Dr. Yvett Petti – Battle Creek, Mich., Battle Creek VAMC
- Dr. Rosalyn Scott – Dayton, Ohio, Dayton VAMC
- Kami Willett – Omaha, Neb., Nebraska Western Iowa Health Care System

The other nominee for the ***Clinical Simulation Training, Education and Research Executive Leadership Award***

- Adam Walmus – Houston, Texas, Michael E. DeBakey VAMC

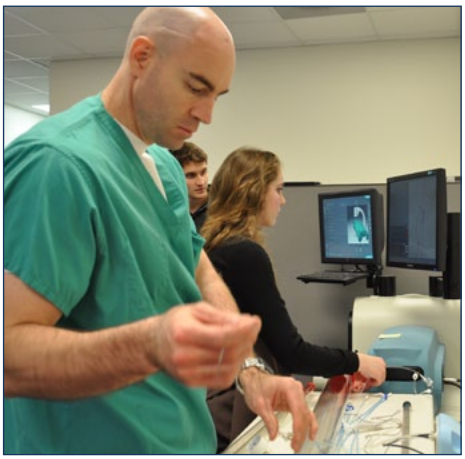
To learn more about the VHA SimLEARN program, visit **www.simlearn.va.gov**. ❖

University of Central Florida students learn vascular surgery techniques at VHA National Simulation Center

By Anjelica Partridge
Coordinator, Information & Publication Services
UCF College of Medicine

ORLANDO, Fla. – Medical students from the University of Central Florida (UCF) conducted simulation training Nov. 14 at the VHA SimLEARN National Simulation Center. Dr. Frederick Fisher, a VA vascular surgeon who also volunteers at UCF, recently offered monthly sessions to first- and second-year students learning techniques in vascular surgery with the assistance of SimLEARN staff.

The training this day involved stenting of the carotid artery. The precise and delicate surgery impacts blood flow to the brain. The procedure is done to help prevent stroke in patients who have a blockage. The UCF medical students surgically "inserted" stents into a virtual carotid artery supplying blood to the brain and then observed what happened to their patient on a simulation screen.



First year students Shane Hamacher (nearest camera), Cara Sherrill and second-year student Zoran Pavlovic (background) test out the surgery simulation. (UCF photo by Anjelica Partridge)

"Initially we opened our clinic to fourth-year medical students, and I noticed that there were very few students who were interested in vascular surgery at that point. It was my conclusion that students need to see this type of procedure early in their education," said Dr. Fisher, who reached out to the students' Vascular Surgery Interest Group (VSIG) early in 2014. "The medical students are doing an elective in vascular surgery simulation as part of their medical school curriculum. I am the supervising physician in my role as volunteer faculty."

Second-year student Zoran Pavlovic said the software – which is typically used for surgical residents – helps young medical students learn surgical procedures without any risk to a patient.

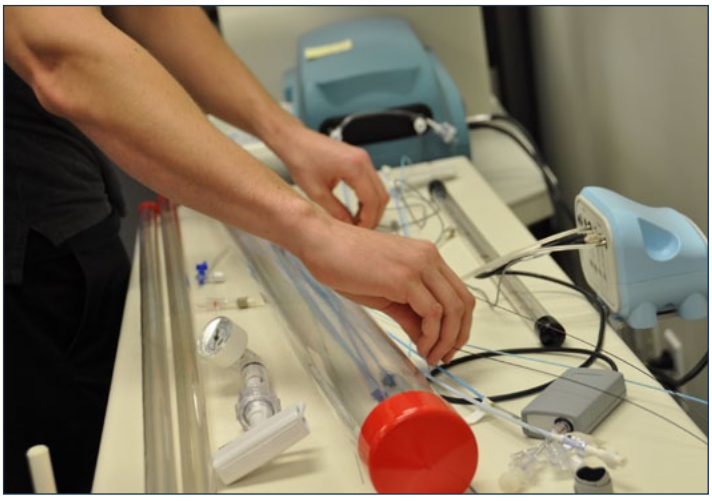
"These simulators are so great, because you can make mistakes while you're learning, and it will tell you exactly what you did wrong," he said. "You're actually trying to learn the machine and learn the individual patient case at the same time. That's where some of the frustrations come in."

Though the learning wasn't easy, the UCF students were eager to get a chance at the surgery. Dr. Fisher looked on and offered tips, but mostly allowed students to learn by trial and error.

"The hope is to provide opportunities for students to develop more skills, so that by the time we reach clerkships, we can have the confidence and foundation to participate in a real case," said second-year student Ben Eslahpazir, VSIG president.

Future sessions will include renal artery stenting and abdominal aneurysm repair, with each new lesson building on previous ones and getting more difficult. Dr. Fisher said he is confident the UCF medical students are up for the challenge.

"I've been very impressed with the students' talent for this, especially at such a young age," he said. "I think they will see as time goes on that the learning curve will get quicker. They're so far ahead of the curve at this point, that it's really remarkable." ❖



Second-year student Zoran Pavlovic carefully maneuvers simulation wires. (UCF photo by Anjelica Partridge)

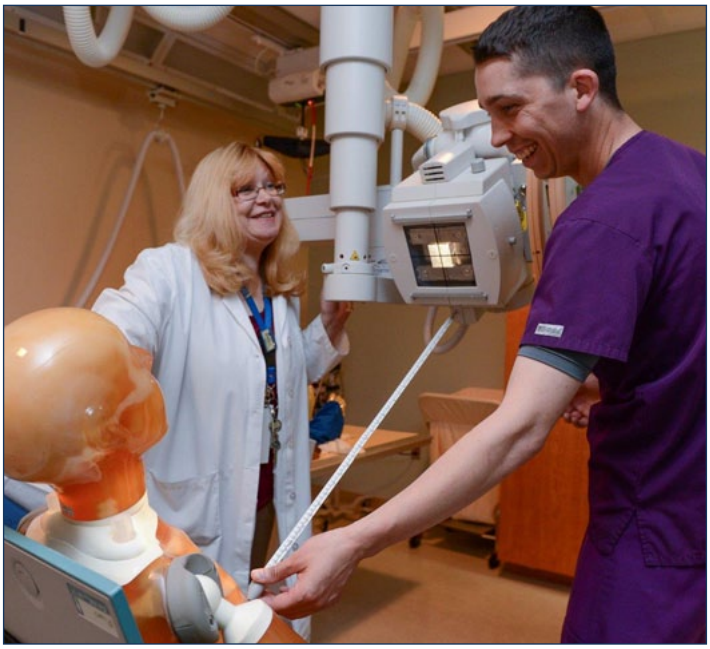
Simulation supports Minneapolis VA School of Radiologic Technology

By David J. Adriansen, Ed.D, NREMT
VISN 23 Simulation Champion
Minneapolis VA Simulation Center

MINNEAPOLIS – The Minneapolis VA School of Radiologic Technology was founded in 1965 at the Minneapolis VA Health Care System (MVAHCS), and it became an accredited program by 1967. The MVAHCS has the only VA radiologic technology training program in the nation, graduating hundreds of students who have gone into successful radiologic technology and radiology-related careers.

The program is affiliated with 50 schools to provide allied health training in 19 programs. The improvements in simulation training and technology are helping student learning, and they recently bolstered the school's efforts with the purchase of two anthropomorphic full-body phantoms capable of x-ray and computed tomography or CT scanning, along with a unique radiology software program loaded to the school's classroom computers. Students have also benefited from trainers for auscultation, haptic intravenous (IV) training and patient assessment; all improving the fidelity (correspondence between simulation and real circumstances) previously encountered.

"The software simulation will provide realistic radiological views for the students and will enhance their learning," said Mike Stori, program director.



(Left to right) Sharon Collins, clinical coordinator and Blake Watson, radiologic technology student use simulation equipment in their radiology technology program. (VA photo by April Eilers)

Sharon Collins, clinical coordinator, appreciated the new phantoms, which offer disarticulating parts for focused x-rays and are benefiting not only the school, but the entire radiology and CT department. They also offer the capability for calibration use by biomedical technicians. Both Stori and Collins agreed that they look forward to using simulation to support program goals. ❖

Nominations open for 2015 Under Secretary for Health's Excellence awards

ORLANDO, Fla. – The VHA SimLEARN program recently announced a call for nominations for the Under Secretary for Health's 2015 awards program for Excellence in Clinical Simulation Training, Education and Research.

The award categories are The Excellence in Clinical Simulation Training, Education and Research Practice Award; and the Clinical Simulation Training, Education and Research Executive Leadership Award.

The practice award recognizes an individual who has been actively engaged in the direct provision of clinical simulation training, education and research at a VHA health care facility and whose practice has had national impact. The leadership award honors one VA medical center director or VISN director who achieved distinction in promoting a significant component of the VHA clinical simulation training, education and research strategic plan.

Go to **www.simlearn.va.gov/SIMLEARN/Awards.asp** for award criteria details and directions on how to submit the nominations, which will be accepted through Feb. 13. ❖

Resuscitation Education Initiative course offers advanced cardiac life support training

By Phil Hargreaves, RN, MSN
Simulation Associate Director for REdI Program

BOISE, Idaho – Staff at the Boise VA Medical Center (VAMC) hosted the first advanced cardiac life support experienced provider (ACLS EP) course, as well as the first ACLS EP instructor course in VHA, Dec. 16 - 18, 2014. These are offered through the Resuscitation Education Initiative (REdI) program located at the VHA SimLEARN National Simulation Center in Orlando.

The December classes produced five new ACLS EP instructors and 12 new ACLS EP providers for the Boise VAMC. The plan is to conduct ACLS EP provider courses several times a year to allow for an increased number of ACLS experienced providers at the patients' bedside.

One of the requirements for an ACLS EP program at a facility is that a physician instructor must be available for consultation during the entire ACLS EP course. However, he or she does not have to be physically present at the course. The Boise VAMC happens to have a critical care pulmonologist, Dr. Paula Carvalho who is their physician instructor.

Merry Kuyper-Carson, RN, MSN, ACNS-BC is the associate chief of nursing education at the Boise VAMC, as well as the program director for ACLS and BLS programs.

"The team there is very excited about this new endeavor for their medical center," she said.

Please contact your assigned health education specialist for more information on how to expand the ACLS program at your site. ❖

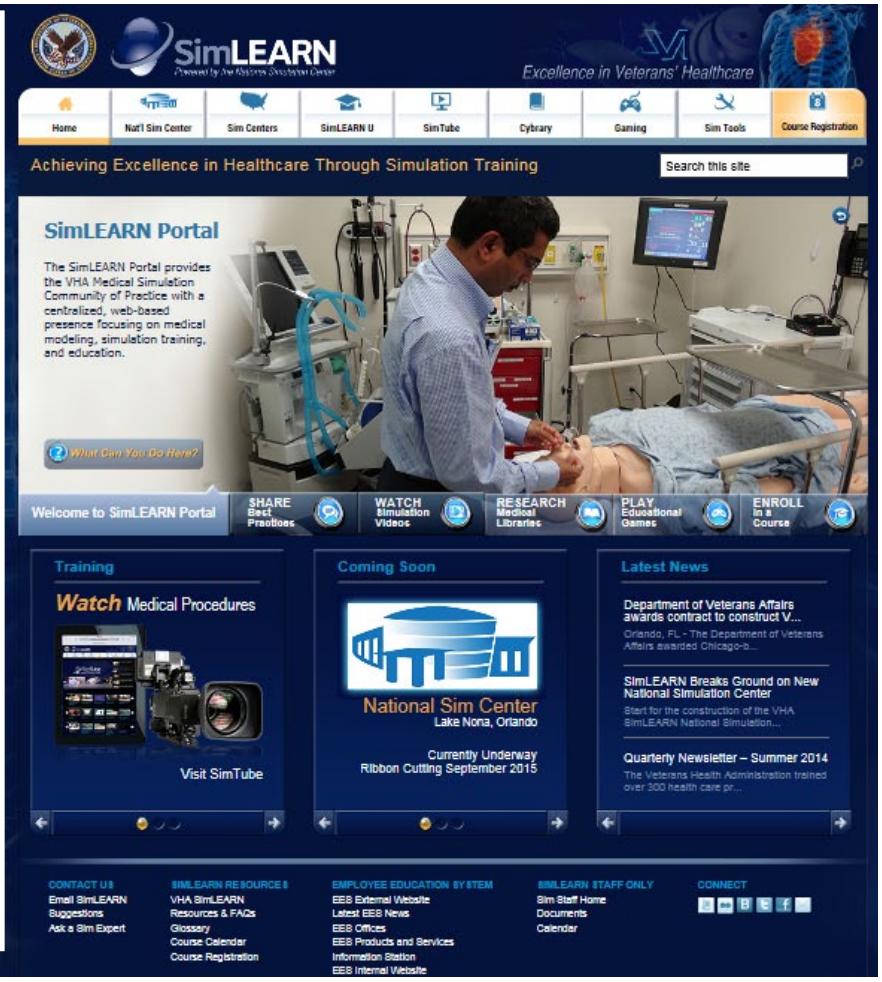
Employee Education System launches SimLEARN portal

ORLANDO, Fla. – The Employee Education System launched a simulation portal for use by VA's SimLEARN Community of Practice.

The portal provides the VHA medical simulation community with a centralized, web-based presence for medical modeling, simulation training and education. Website features include:

- Best practices
- Training and "how to" instructional videos, including videos from SimLEARN partners and simulation center tour videos
- An on-line "Cybrary" for medical library research
- And later this year: medical simulation gaming

VA staff only may access the site **here**. Email **simlearnQA@plan-sys.com** for more information. ❖



St. Cloud providers train toward improved care for women Veterans

By Kristy Reinke, MSN, CNL RN
PSM Nursing Educator
St. Cloud VA Health Care System

ST. CLOUD, Minn. – During October, 45 providers from the St. Cloud VA Health Care System (VAHCS) completed half-hour training on a new clinical breast exam (CBE) simulator–trainer to enhance their learning experience. The goal of this training was to provide breast exam proficiency for every clinician who examines women, as well as for every woman who performs a self-exam. This is a first use of this specific technology at this facility, and the results led to a more realistic scenario experience for examining the breast and diagnosing different types of breast lumps.

A CBE simulator–trainer is a self-administered palpation-training platform that teaches recognized quality-standard examination protocols. Since performing a breast examination is a complex skill, the CBE allows providers to perfect their techniques and become more comfortable and confident about performing breast exams, thus improving the care for women Veterans. The simulator-trainer interacts with the learner, advancing their clinical sensitivity and specificity via progressively more complex breast models that are placed on its surface. A digital "clinical instructor" guides the learner through the training modules, assessing progress and providing corrective feedback.

Being a breast cancer survivor myself, I was very excited to implement this new training. The training was not only offered to physicians, but also to registered nurses, licensed practical nurses and clerks to promote women's health. The simulation training consisted of a training model where participants could view four different types of lumps while the clinical instructor guided them through the exam. The second module was flesh colored tissue and the trainers were expected to find the lumps without the ability of seeing them.

The training was well received, and it is hoped that the instruction that providers received will result in more long-term improved lump detection and examination technique use. ❖

High-fidelity simulation education addresses Veterans' anxiety over postoperative care

By Bonnie Haupt DNP, RN, CNL, CHSE
Patient Experience Officer
VA Connecticut Healthcare System

Editor's Note: This is a portion of an article that appeared in the November issue of *Clinical Simulation In Nursing*.

WEST HAVEN, Conn. – A feasibility study conducted at the VA Connecticut Healthcare System (VACHS) evaluated the influence of simulation education on the knowledge, satisfaction, anxiety and length of stay of Veterans' undergoing coronary artery bypass graph (CABG) surgeries.

My experiences working as a surgical intensive care unit nurse caring for Veterans and their family members post-CABG guided me in the concept for the feasibility study. Patients receiving CABG surgeries expressed anxieties over their lack of understanding of postoperative care and expectations, as well as their families' anxiety over the post-operative period and lack of understanding of their roles in the recovery period and plan of care.

In 2008, an estimated 7.3 million deaths were associated to coronary heart diseases according to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2011). In the U.S., CABG surgeries are the largest number of open heart surgeries performed (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2011). In 2009, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that over 415,000 people received CABG surgery. The Joint Commission mandated in 2006 that each patient receive education specific to their care and treatment; however, few facilities have focused on diverse educational methods.

Most educational experiences for patients include verbal and written handouts. It has been identified that an absence of various teaching methods can lead to a lack of patient

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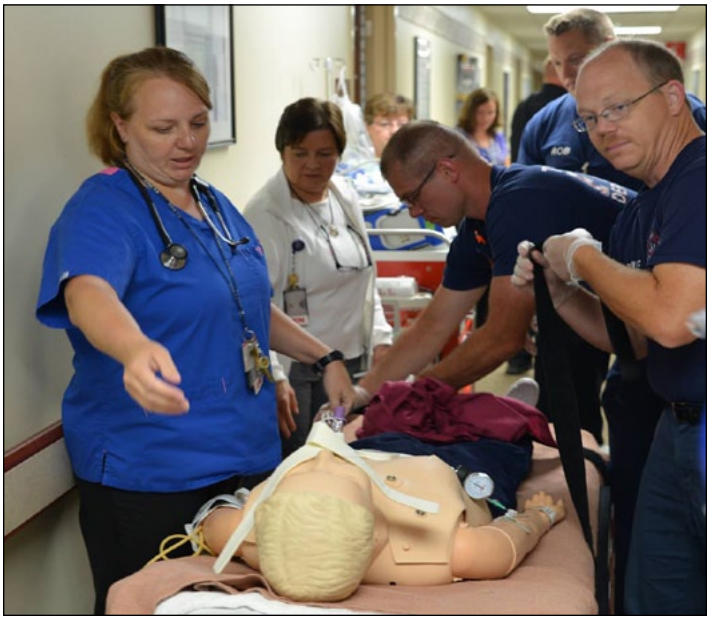
Tomah VA Medical Center creates training video using simulation

By Marcy Engebretson, RN-BC, MSN-Ed
Clinical Nurse Educator

TOMAH, Wisc. – Tomah VA Medical Center (VAMC) staff recently helped the Tomah education department keep staff proficient in their jobs by filming a training video of a scripted medical emergency.

The purpose of the video is to teach new nursing staff and provide a refresher to seasoned nursing staff on how to respond efficiently to a medical emergency. Tomah VA has also implemented a mock code task force, and this video will be used as a training aid in all environments of care at the Tomah VAMC. Mock codes are a great way for staff to get engaged, observe roles and ask questions.

The use of simulation enhances learning, increases self-confidence, identifies best practices and promotes safe, quality care. ❖



(Left to right) Amy Lisi, RN; Dona Richards, clinical nurse educator; and firefighters Robert Harter, Craig Schendel, and Christopher Prindiville, work on a "patient." (VA photo by Scott Farley)

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understanding (Hahn, Fish, Dunn & Halperin, 2005; Harless et al., 2009; Kolb, 1984; Mikulaninec, 1987).

Simulation as an educational tool has been recognized as a successful educational method with professional disciplines including the aviation, medical, military and nursing professions. In the last decade, new research has emerged incorporating advanced technology into patient education sessions that provide an advantage over usual teaching methods.

Veterans scheduled to receive CABG at VACHS who were found to have met inclusion criteria were asked to join the study and institutional review board consent was obtained. Veterans were randomly placed into control-usual education and simulation intervention groups. The pre-CABG knowledge and levels of state and trait anxiety were measured before either educational intervention. The control-usual group attended a one-on-one education session with the advanced practice registered nurse in a clinic setting. Veterans in the simulation intervention group received their educational session in an ICU environment that mimicked the post-operative period with the nurse researcher. After the interventions, both the control and experimental groups knowledge, state anxiety and overall satisfaction of the educational methods was evaluated.

Overall increases in Veteran knowledge and satisfaction were identified within the high-fidelity simulation education group over the usual control education group, as well as a decrease in Veteran anxiety. The findings suggest there is great potential for use of high-fidelity simulation as an educational tool for meeting patients' individual learning needs.

In hopes of improving both understanding and patient responses to a specific health care plan through simulation education, it is possible to reduce psychological and physical post-operative complications. The use of simulation education for patients is the next logical step for advancing this interactive educational tool.

There is great potential for simulation education for patients, I would be happy to work with interested facilities in replication of the study providing all the guidance, education and material needed. Please contact **Bonnie.Haupt@va.gov** with any questions. ❖

SimLEARN part of overall effort in VA's Ebola prevention training

By Gerald Sonnenberg
EES Marketing and Communication

ORLANDO, Fla. – The outbreak of the Ebola virus in West Africa, as well as the treatment of patients in the U.S. caused apprehension and fear around the world in 2014. However, U.S. government agencies responsible for public health, including VA, took steps to respond to the situation: they put together multiple working groups to monitor the situation; coordinated efforts with local, state and Federal public health groups; developed drills to test hospital response capabilities; and educated VA health care staff by providing training exercises, national calls and up-to-date guidance on infection control and prevention. SimLEARN has been a part of that combined effort by helping develop three simulation scenarios to evaluate facility response to a potential Ebola patient.

Development of the initial scenario began in October when SimLEARN staff met with representatives of the Office of Emergency Management. Since then, the team has developed two additional scenarios. The three simulation scenarios they developed support each of the three tiers of the Ebola Virus Rehearsal of Concept (ROC) drill.

The goal of the ROC drill is to ensure that facilities have worked out their processes for identification, appropriate isolation and management/transfer of patients with suspected or known Ebola virus disease. In addition, it allows designated health care providers the opportunity to practice donning and doffing protective suits, as well as demonstrate good teamwork and communication skills. The first simulation scenario to support Tier 3 locations was delivered through a MyVeHU session in November. The plan for demonstrating the remaining two simulation scenarios is still in discussion.

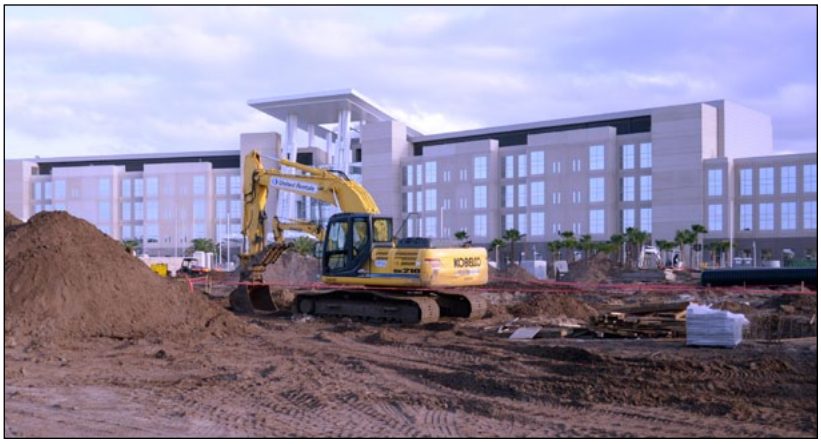
Three members of the SimLEARN staff are involved in the development of the training: SimLEARN nurse educator Melissa Brickner; Jason Pollock, healthcare education specialist, and Dr. Haru Okuda, SimLEARN national medical director.

"Traditionally, the use of simulation in health care focused on training health care providers," said Dr. Okuda. "More recently, simulation has demonstrated to be an extremely effective tool in testing hospital system response capabilities, as well as evaluating clinical process and new clinical construction, prior to patient care.

"The Ebola Virus ROC drill is an excellent example of the use of simulation as a tool to ensure safe care for our providers and Veterans," he added. ❖

Construction update

A backhoe loader is positioned to continue work on the foundation for the new VHA SimLEARN National Simulation Center in this Jan. 5 photograph. The Center is being constructed in front of and to the right of the new Orlando VA Medical Center (background) in Lake Nona's Medical City near Orlando, Fla. Construction is expected to take approximately 15 months. (VA photo by Ramon Garcia) ❖



SimLEARN Newsletter is a product of the Veterans Health Administration National Simulation Center. The program's operations and management is conducted by the VHA Employee Education System in close collaboration with the Office of Patient Care Services and the Office of Nursing Services. For more information, visit **www.simlearn.va.gov** or e-mail **VASimLEARNGeneralInformation@va.gov**.

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