

SIMULATION EXCHANGE



A publication of the VHA SimLEARN
National Simulation Center

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New National Simulation Center opens



SIMULATION EXCHANGE

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The program's operations and management is
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VA



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(Left to right) Lauren Mitchell, widow of Scott Mitchell, receives a replica shadow box of the one placed at the entrance of the room named for her late husband. Presenting is Dr. Harry Robinson, SimLEARN national program manager, and close friend and co-worker Larry Davis, SimLEARN simulation specialist. (VA photo by Gerald Sonnenberg)

SimLEARN 'pioneer' honored

By Gerald Sonnenberg
EES Marketing and Communication

ORLANDO, Fla. – One year ago, SimLEARN staff bid farewell to Scott Mitchell, SimLEARN lead simulation specialist and retired Navy chief petty officer, when he passed away at his home.

Scott is regarded by SimLEARN staff as a “pioneer” of the program. He had a significant impact on the design and capabilities of the new VHA SimLEARN National Simulation Center (NSC), though he never had the chance to step inside the high-tech facility. That impact was recognized Sept. 15 with a room dedication.

With his family, friends and coworkers as witnesses, SimLEARN staff dedicated their “Sim Cave” for Scott. The Sim Cave is the control room where simulation specialists manage the various training scenarios in which students participate. Scott coined the term Sim Cave because the lights were kept off, and walking in to the darkened work area was like walking into a cave. The name stuck.

During his almost 4-year tenure, he implemented numerous projects that have had a significant and long-lasting positive impact in increasing and sustaining health care provider skills that ultimately improve Veteran patient outcomes.

At the entrance of the Sim Cave is a shadow box, which is a traditional item presented to retiring military members and holds that person's decorations and other items significant to their career. There is also a plaque that reads, “In memory of Chief Petty Officer Scott Mitchell, USN (retired) SimLEARN Simulation Specialist. For his innovation, dedication, and leadership to forge SimLEARN into the premier world-class medical simulation facility that it is today, we salute and thank you. Fair winds and calm seas, chief. We have the watch.” ❖

On the cover: (Pictured left to right) Cutting the ribbon Sept. 16 were Dr. Lygia Arcaro, SimLEARN national director for nursing programs; Louise Van Diepen, former VHA Employee Education System (EES) acting chief learning officer; Stella Fiotes, executive director for VA's Office of Construction and Facilities Management; Dr. Manny Dominguez, EES deputy chief learning officer; Wilson Ariza, SimLEARN associate director for training; Florida Congressman Daniel Webster; Leslie Dubow, EES associate director for educational gaming; Dr. Richard Stone, VA principal deputy under secretary for health; Phil Hargreaves, SimLEARN associate director for the REdI program; Florida Congressman John Mica; Tim Liezert, director of the Orlando VA Medical Center; Dr. Haru Okuda, SimLEARN national medical director; Dr. Harry Robinson, SimLEARN national program manager. (VA photo by Gerald Sonnenberg)



A photograph of the completed VHA SimLEARN National Simulation Center. (VA photo by Ramon (Boty) Garcia)

VHA holds National Simulation Center ribbon cutting, dedication

*By Gerald Sonnenberg
EES Marketing and Communication*

ORLANDO, Fla. – The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Simulation Learning, Education and Research Network (SimLEARN) National Simulation Center was officially opened with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Friday, Sept. 16. Dr. Richard Stone, VA principal deputy under secretary for health, provided the keynote address.

After the event, attendees toured the facility and saw demonstration scenarios of the facility's various capabilities. This included staff transferring a "patient" from an ambulance to an emergency room setting, to an intensive care unit and to a hospital room.

The center provides a high-technology environment to provide training to VHA staff. It also provides a variety of learning environments so clinicians and other staff train in the most realistic environment possible.

However, in contrast to the sophisticated technology, the goal of the new center is simple, according to its leadership.

"SimLEARN and the VHA National Simulation Center apply simulation-based training and technology to advance the skills of our clinical workforce, maximize

teamwork and communication skills, increase access to care and, most importantly, improve Veteran health care outcomes and quality of care," said Dr. Haru Okuda, SimLEARN national medical director. "The SimLEARN program is different than most simulation centers associated with academic medical centers throughout the country in that it provides interprofessional training, which includes doctors, nurses and associated health staff. And, the focus is on training our workforce, and not specifically nursing and medical students or residents."

The facility is located on the campus of the new Orlando VA Medical Center, located in Lake Nona's Medical City, and provides a high-fidelity training environment by replicating actual patient treatment areas, including an outpatient clinic setting, as well as an inpatient/hospital setting.

Video recording of training takes place for classroom debriefing and review, and multipurpose classrooms have reconfigurable walls to provide a number of room settings. At least 10 classrooms accommodate up to 160 students. In addition, the facility includes six outpatient clinic rooms; three specialty procedure rooms; two operating rooms and cardiac catheterization lab; one emergency room and ambulance; one

mental health room; three intensive care unit/community living center/medical surgery rooms; five debriefing rooms; one procedural trainer room; one computer room; one broadcast and video suite; four multipurpose rooms; and one innovation room.

"SimLEARN focuses on the 'train the trainer' concept," said Dr. Harry Robinson, SimLEARN national program manager. "Representatives from VA medical centers nationwide will experience SimLEARN's immersive, high-technology training to become instructors, and then take their knowledge and skill back to conduct local training; it's a proven concept that is both effective and efficient."

Classes at the facility began in July, but new courses and classes are being scheduled now.

The location of the National Simulation Center, with its close proximity to other large clinical, educational and research facilities, provides enhanced opportunities for collaborations and research in new clinical simulation technologies and methods.

More information about SimLEARN training is available to employees [here](#), and on the public website at www.simlearn.va.gov.

Please see pages 4 and 5 for a virtual tour of parts of the facility. ❖

A virtual tour

The ribbon cutting of the new VHA SimLEARN National Simulation Center allowed staff to welcome several guests. In the photo at right, Dr. Richard Stone, VA principal deputy under secretary for health, addresses a crowd of nearly 200. Listening at his left are (left to right) Congressman John Mica from Florida's 7th District; Congressman Daniel Webster from Florida's 10th District; and Dr. Haru Okuda, SimLEARN national medical director. (Photo by Frank Weber, Orange County Florida staff)

VHA staff also provided demonstrations in the facility after the ceremony. (Photo below, left to right) Michael Bussing, BSN, RN, from the Battle Creek, Michigan VA Medical Center, and Larry Davis, SimLEARN simulation specialist, demonstrate the transporting of patients by ambulance. SimLEARN's ambulance is the cargo area of an actual ambulance, with working lights and other equipment.



(Above, left to right) SimLEARN staff Dr. Patricio Bruno and registered nurses Susan Martenson and Davina Dietrich demonstrate triaging a "patient" in the emergency room.

(Photo, center right) Davina Dietrich, RN, performs cardiopulmonary resuscitation on the patient during a scenario.

(Photo, right) The NSC is also equipped with a cardiac catheterization lab for training. Cardiac catheterization (cardiac cath or heart cath) is a procedure to examine how well a heart is working. A thin, hollow tube, called a catheter, is inserted into a large blood vessel that leads to your heart. The procedure identifies problems and allows for procedures to open blocked arteries.





(Photo, top left) Dr. Malcolm Klein, (left) a VA physician at SimLEARN and the Tampa, Florida VAMC, and Dr. Christopher Prevel, chief of surgery at the Orlando VAMC, describe the capabilities of the surgical area of the National Simulation Center to visitors while other staff members conduct the demonstration.

(Photo, top right) A scrub room allows students to "scrub in" for procedures, which adds to the realism of training.

(Above) One of the clinic exam rooms. Note the two-way mirror behind the exam table. Observation by training staff is essential, and these mirrors can be found in every training area.

(Left, center) Patient rooms also double as intensive care unit rooms. Detail is key to providing a realistic environment for students.



(Left) This is the large observation area overlooking both the surgical suite and the cardiac catheterization lab. Simulation technicians not only observe training but can also control the scenarios from the observation points. (All photos by Gerald Sonnenberg unless otherwise indicated)



Staff and students pose in the lobby of the new VHA SimLEARN National Simulation Center on break from the first class held there in July. Staff include (Left to right) Diana Sarmiento, Jorge Nieves, Wilson Ariza and Brian Peplinski; students Minu Thomas, RN; Celia Ayala, RN; Dana Shipp, RN; Leberato Rael III; Johnna Greeley, RN, BSN; Patricia Morton, RN, MSA; Elizabeth King, MSN; Albert Tinker MSH, RN; and staff Ally Chiang, Jimmy Bloodgood, Larry Davis and Terry Exum. (VA photo by Ramon Garcia)

First classes held at National Simulation Center

ORLANDO, Fla. – SimLEARN staff took possession of the new VHA SimLEARN National Simulation Center (NSC) in April, and spent the summer moving in. Though they were still in the process of finalizing their move, they began holding classes in the new facility in July.

The first course held was a Simulation, Technology, Operations, Maintenance and Practices (STOMP) training course. The purpose of this face-to-face simulation supported training is to address the appropriate competencies of health care simulation personnel in the identified knowledge gap to operate simulation equipment provided through association with SimLEARN.

SimLEARN designs and delivers curricula based upon the appropriate operation of simulation equipment to achieve course objectives. VHA personnel delivering the training have a need for better understanding in the daily operations of the equipment provided for training VHA health care professionals in the treatment of our Veteran population.

This intensive, 3-day course is designed to give participants the knowledge and hands-on skill to operate, assess issues and repair deficiencies, and maintain the technologically advanced health care simulation equipment required to conduct immersive, plausible and immensely valuable medical simulation training. The course combines small group and hands-on simulation activities where participants demonstrate the competencies necessary to accomplish simulation scenario activities. Students also participate in a Level 3 evaluation at three months and six month intervals to share efficacy information regarding this educational initiative.

The second course held is called POCUS or point of care ultrasound training. POCUS provides entry-level principles of ultrasonography for use by physicians at the bedside.

The course has a hands-on simulation component in addition to didactic material on the principles of ultrasonography and its potential implications in developing and narrowing a differential diagnosis. While it will not produce experts in ultrasonography, it

will, at a minimum, offer a deeper appreciation for the potential benefits of bedside ultrasonography and, at most, teach useful techniques that may be incorporated.

The NSC provides students access to classrooms for up to 160 students in addition to six outpatient clinic rooms; three specialty procedure rooms; two operating rooms; a cardiac catheterization lab; one emergency room with ambulance, as well as a variety of other types of medical center environments that make training as realistic as possible. The facility is located next to the new Orlando VA Medical Center on the Lake Nona, Florida, campus.

More information about each course and other courses is available on the SimLEARN Course Catalog [here](#). ❖



Dr. Megan Core, a SimLEARN national point of care ultrasound (POCUS) training instructor, teaches student Dr. William Ruiz, James A. Haley Veterans Hospital in Tampa, Florida, how to examine the abdominal aorta with ultrasound with the help of a University of Central Florida standardized patient. (VA photo by Ramon Garcia)

2015 Under Secretary for Health's Excellence Awards announced

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Four VHA leaders were singled out for their expertise in leadership and mentoring in the field of clinical simulation training to earn the 2015 VA Under Secretary for Health's Awards for Excellence in Clinical Simulation Training, Education and Research.

This award program recognizes clinical and executive leaders who have supported and advanced VHA's strategic plan for clinical simulation.

James M. Hay, Ed.D, MSN, RN, CRRN, associate chief nurse for executive education at the VA Roseburg Healthcare System (HCS) in Oregon, was selected as the recipient of the Excellence in Clinical Simulation Training, Education and Research Executive Leadership Award.

Other nominees for this award were: Dr. Sheila Gelman, Dayton VA Medical Center (VAMC) in Ohio; Dr. Jack Hetrick, Dayton VAMC; and C. Diana Nicoll, M.D., Ph.D, MPA, San Francisco VAMC.

Judy Murphy, Ph.D, RN, cares for our Veterans at the Providence VAMC in Rhode Island. She was named the recipient of the Excellence in Clinical

Simulation Training, Education and Research Practice Award.

Other nominees for this award were: Paula Carvalho, M.D., Boise, Idaho VAMC; Jessica Feinleib, M.D., Ph.D, CHSE, VA Connecticut HCS, Newington; Bob Gauder, MS, RN, CRRN, Dayton VAMC; Kyle Harrison, M.D., and Steven Howard, M.D., Palo Alto VAHCS, California; Dr. Brian Kaufman, VA New York Harbor HCS, Manhattan; Anneka Mikel, BSN, RN, Sioux Falls, South Dakota VAHCS; Bernadette Montano, RN, MSN, Southern Arizona VAHCS, Tucson; Amanda Morrow, RN, BSN, VA Roseburg HCS; Michelle Ralson, RN, BSN, VA Eastern Kansas HCS, Topeka; Norberto Rosado-Canales, MSN, RN, VA Caribbean HCS, San Juan, Puerto Rico; Nilam Soni, M.D., South Texas Veterans HCS, San Antonio; and Kami Willett, MSN, RN-BC, Nebraska-Western Iowa HCS, Omaha.

Agnes Urbas-Llewellyn, Ed.D, MSN, is chief of education learning resources at the Martinsburg, West Virginia VAMC. She was named the recipient of the Excellence in Clinical Simulation Training, Education

and Research Champion Award.

Other nominees for this award were: David Adriansen, Ed.D, NREMT, Minneapolis VAHCS, Minnesota; Dr. Joyce Akwe, Atlanta VAMC, Georgia; Merry Kupyier-Carson, MSN, ACNS-BC, Boise VAMC; Edwin Negron-Cortes, MSN, RN-BC, VA Caribbean HCS; Saly Pius, MSN, RN, CCRN, CHSE, Atlanta VAMC; and LeAnn Schlamb, Cincinnati VAMC in Ohio.

Finally, Agustin Hernandez-Rovira is an education program specialist for the Resuscitation Education Initiative (REDI) at the VA Maryland HCS in Baltimore. He was selected as the recipient of the Excellence in Clinical Simulation Training, Education and Research Champion Award for the REDI program.

Other nominees for this award were: Marc Breslauer, RN, MSN, Southern Arizona VAHCS; Herbert Cooke, RN, BSN, MSA, CNOR, Hampton VAMC, Virginia; Debra Fisher, RN, Syracuse VAMC, New York; Linda Healy, MSN, ARNP, C-S, Orlando VAMC, Florida; Reggie Horwitz, PMC, MSN, RN-BC, Durham VAMC, North Carolina; Josie Iozzo, RN, BSN, MPH, Coatesville VAMC, Pennsylvania; and Rushikesh Shah, M.D., Syracuse VAMC.

Congratulations to all of the winners and nominees. ❖

2014 Awards presented



Rosalyn P. Scott, M.D., is presented the 2014 Excellence in Clinical Simulation Training, Education and Research Practice Award by Dr. Harry Robinson, SimLEARN national program manager. Scott is the associate chief of staff for medical education, as well as the Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 10 simulation champion located at the Dayton VA Medical Center (VAMC) in Ohio.



(Second from left) David J. Adriansen, Ed.D, nationally registered emergency medical technician (NREMT), was also a recipient of the 2014 Excellence in Clinical Simulation Training, Education and Research Practice Award. Adriansen is manager of the Minneapolis VAMC Simulation Center, where he champions clinical simulation for VISN 23. He is pictured with (left to right) Patrick Kelly, director; Dr. Ezgi Tiryaki, associate chief of staff/education; and Dr. Harry Robinson. (VA courtesy photos) ❖

REdI staff continues roll out of new training from American Heart Association



By Gerald Sonnenberg
EES Marketing and Communication

ORLANDO, Fla. – Last spring, SimLEARN's Resuscitation Education Initiative (REdI) began rolling out and providing a new training initiative by the American Heart Association (AHA) called the Resuscitation Quality Improvement program or RQI. RQI is designed to address the problem of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) skills rapid degradation after initial training.

Three VA medical centers (VAMC): VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System; VA Asheville, North Carolina; and VA Eastern Kansas Healthcare System, Topeka, Kansas, became pilot sites. Others soon followed.

"The training has been very well received, and sites are very excited about implementing it," said Davina Dietrich, MSN, RN, CCRN-K, a health education specialist with SimLEARN's REdI program. "RQI is AHA's quality improvement program which addresses the need for providers to maintain their competency for providing high-quality CPR skills, verses completing a course every two years," said Dietrich.

She oversees VHA's Veterans Integrated

Service Networks (VISN) 6, 15, 19 and 23, and covers six of the first 10 pilot sites, including the Hunter Holms McGuire VAMC in Virginia. It is located in VISN 6, and became a pilot site in July.

Brenda French, MSN, CRRN, CBIS, VHA-CM, RN-BC, is the REdI program director there.

"We currently have 12 RQI carts that I maintain throughout our large facility, and we have ordered an additional ten carts," said French.

She explained that she held one major training event, followed by two smaller training/practice sessions. They now have 25 superusers or RQI champions.

"Since those sessions in July, I have set up two demonstrations in our mall area with an RQI cart and invited staff from all areas to observe the skills and see and

hear the feedback."

During a more recent demo, she discussed what was going on with several Veterans as they walked by. "I had one visitor/Veteran ask to give it a try, and I allowed her to do compressions." French said she also performed 10 rounds of compressions to demonstrate what the feedback would be under different situations.

The program is a cloud-based, turn-key learning and training service from AHA using e-learning content with hands-on training conducted using a facility's Voice Assisted Mannequin (VAM). The program includes cognitive components that are delivered online and psychomotor skills assessments that can be performed at CPR testing stations. The stations are equipped with adult and infant mannequins, as well as a tablet computer that connects the student to the training material.

The program is designed to be available to students at their convenience and includes the same cognitive and skill modules as a conventional CPR training program. Cognitive and skills modules are assigned to students, along with deadlines for completion to keep their cards current. Cognitive modules may be completed on a computer through VA's Talent Management System (TMS) over the course of 2 years, with the adult content completed in the first year, and the child/infant content completed in the second year. Students complete the skills modules on a quarterly basis at the CPR testing station, which provides helpful

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(Right) Carol Hightower, RN (in lab coat), instructs other registered nurses at the Richmond VAMC to become RQI "Champions." Left to right are Bindu Joseph, Darren Lacroix, Tomaris Smith, Martha Harrison, Katherine Colbert and Robyn Jones. (VA courtesy photo)





Jason Pollock, a contracted SimLEARN staff member, demonstrates a Simpad device for VA attendees at the event. (VA courtesy photo)

REdI trains VHA staff at Orlando event

ORLANDO, Fla. – About 200 VA health professionals received training on a variety of Advanced Cardiac Life Support, Basic Life Support and Advanced Trauma Life Support techniques and equipment July 26-28 by SimLEARN's Resuscitation Education Initiative (REdI) staff in Orlando.

The overall purpose of the event was to orient VHA resuscitation education staff about the vision and strategy to address resuscitation training, education and research needs; the American Heart Association (AHA) 2015 Guidelines; the evidence supporting the use of clinical resuscitation simulation; the various modalities of clinical resuscitation simulation; resuscitation simulation educational processes and current technologies; and finally, their personal role in facilitating the VHA resuscitation education strategic plan.

"The conference was the best that I have attended in 35 years. It was the perfect mix of didactic and hands on," said attendee Beverly Massey, MSN, RN, REdI program director at the Memphis, Tennessee VA Medical Center. ❖

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visual and audio feedback for compressions and ventilations, monitors the quality of performance and provides reinforcement or suggestions for improvement. RQI students must have a current AHA course completion card with the 2015 science updates and at least 12 months remaining before expiration. Students who don't have a current card may also obtain a card through traditional methods, such as a classroom-based course, HeartCode Online training and either VAM or an instructor led skills check.

If an individual continues to perform quarterly skills checks, the expiration on their card is advanced 3 months. This means if they keep up with skills training on a quarterly basis, their card will, essentially, never expire, and they will not have to attend a seated course again. In turn, this will ensure clinicians spend less time away from the unit to care for patients.

How does your facility get the RQI Program? The facility REdI program director should contact their health education specialist from REdI to discuss and schedule a question and answer phone conference with key stakeholders. Once the site has agreed to support RQI, they complete a memorandum of understanding signed by the facility leadership. A kick off call is scheduled to identify which units will be assigned the training, their location, the number of simulation CPR testing stations required and other operational components. Then a comprehensive process is followed to ensure the facility is ready for an RQI program installation, including creating an online account, importing student records and scheduling the initial training.

AHA created a video and provided the following YouTube link for those interested in learning more about the program. You can view the video [here](#). ❖

New course addresses tracheal suctioning

*By Paul Seim, CRT, Respiratory Therapy Supervisor, SCI/D Respiratory Coordinator and Tina Barnum MSN, RN, CCRN Case Manager
Minneapolis VA Health Care System*

MINNEAPOLIS – An educational DecisionSim course called "Tracheal Suction for non-Ventilated Patients" was recently developed at the Minneapolis Veterans Affairs Health Care System (MVAHCS) to address training gaps noted in many areas within the hospital setting. The idea for the course originated after the Minneapolis Spinal Cord Injury and Disorder unit (SCI/D) opening in 2009 when a need for education related to suction was determined.

The initial education was performed in a more traditional manner and incorporated simulation for the skills testing. The initial feedback was positive, and word soon spread to multiple units within the facility that the education was offered through the respiratory therapy department. Soon multiple units requested the education.

Through the process, two system changes occurred. The first was the standardization of suction catheters used throughout the MVAHCS after identifying characteristics of "better" suction catheters. The second was an issue that was identified during classes. It became apparent that MVAHCS had multiple suction regulators, none of which operated the same way, and some that were older. As a result, the entire facility was standardized to a suction regulator that showed the true pressure upon setting rather than having to have a multi-step system to adjust the pressure.

By 2015, the course was completed and can now be found on VA's Talent Management System (TMS) as TMS item number VA 28787.

The program also received national accreditation for 1 Continuing Education Unit (CEU) if the program is completed, including the simulation portion. In addition, many nursing units at MVAHCS require all new staff to take the program, as well as during the new employee orientation. ❖



(Left to right) Dr. Janet Sprehe, APN-BC, CVRN, RN-BC; Dr. Carol Wilson, DNP, MBA/TM, CCRN, CEN and Carla Brunk, RN, MSN, stand proudly in front of their mobile simulation bus. (VA photo by Kevin Solomon)

‘Sim Bus’ helps keep simulation moving along in Tampa

By Dr. Janet Sprehe, APN-BC, CVRN, RN-BC
Clinical Nurse Educator/Chief of Staff
James A. Haley Veterans Hospital

TAMPA, Fla. – As simulation emerges as a best practice in education, access to its offered trainings can still remain a challenge. As a result, the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital (JAHVH) simulation faculty teamed up with the JAHVH disaster emergency management program leader in August 2015 to use one of the larger dual use vehicles on campus to bring education to outlying clinics.

Now called the Sim Bus, the vehicle was allocated to the JAHVH's simulation program to simulate disaster planning, surgery and computerized tomography (CT) scanning.

The JAHVH in Tampa serves over 94,000 unique Veteran and active duty patients in more than 1.2 million outpatient visits. These visits take place at its main hospital, primary care annex, outpatient clinic and three Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC) spread out over more than two dozen offsite locations.

Currently, more than 260 nursing and medical staff work at locations other than the main hospital campus.

It's often difficult, if not impossible, to schedule staff training at the main campus for those who work offsite due to travel time and staffing priorities. Thus, staff working offsite do not get the same opportunity to attend classes as those working at the main hospital. The Sim Bus helps provide a solution.

It is used to medically transport patients in a natural disaster to specific designated areas away from harm's reach. The 36-foot Sim Bus can seat a configuration of 30 passengers, or 15 litters, or 10 wheelchairs. It has a wheelchair lift, hepa ultraviolet air purification system, oxygen mounting brackets, electrical wall outlets, 10kw power generator and a large retractable loading ramp among many other features.

In an actual emergency, this bus can be used to perform surgery and CT scanning if necessary.

"Triageing patients in a natural disaster is much different than the routine triaging of patients we do when patients come to the emergency department for various ailments or injury," said Carla Brunk, RN, VA simulation faculty.

Nursing education and the chief of staff's office worked together to develop training scenarios that

coordinate with seven mannequins mouldaged to fit each scenario. During training, participants receive cards describing the "patients'" injuries. Participants then have to use critical thinking skills in deciding how they would triage each patient; categorizing who would need care first. They then triage the patients by color priority and determine which of them would go first to surgery and which would be first to get a CT scan.

Clinic staff appreciate the opportunity to prepare for a large scale disaster and triaging multiple patients with varying degrees of injuries. Dr. Vanessa C. Osting, chief medical officer at the Lakeland CBOC, said, "This Sim Bus is fantastic! We all rotated through it this morning and look forward to future simulations with it."

The VA Sim Bus is also part of a strategic partnership with the JAHVH's largest affiliates: the University of South Florida (USF) College of Public Health and College of Nursing, and the University of Tampa (UT) College of Nursing. The Sim Bus provides training twice a year to the USF College of Public Health.

One training focuses on natural disaster scenarios from weather

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VA, DOD partner during simulation consortium

By Joseph Love, MDiv, BSN, RN, CFRN, EMT Clinical Educator, Facility Simulation Coordinator, REdl Program Director Martinsburg VA Medical Center

MARTINSBURG, W.V. – On March 16, the Martinsburg VA Medical Center (VAMC) hosted Department of Defense (DOD) partners from the National Capital Simulation Consortium. It consists of the Uniformed Services University, Val G. Hemming Simulation Center and the simulation center at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

The site visit was part of the larger National Capital Region DOD and VA Capitol Health Care Network (VISN 5) simulation partnership development process. In addition, it defined strategic objectives for both groups where Aggie Llewellyn, Ed.D., MSN, RN-BC, DLO, DEO, the VHA's VISN 5 SimLEARN Champion, continues to be instrumental in leading the partnership.

Over 20 key medical center stakeholders attended a session facilitated

by Lt. Col. (P) Jeffrey Mikita, M.D., FACP, FCCP, the simulation department chief at Walter Reed and the Chair of the National Capital Simulation Consortium. The session started with Mikita providing a presentation entitled "Building a Successful Simulation Program," and it concluded with a robust five-year strategic planning session for the Martinsburg VAMC clinical simulation program.

The true value of the strategic planning session was supported by the medical center staff who attended. Attendees included service chiefs from surgery, rehabilitation, biomedical, primary care, the emergency department, pulmonary intensive care and the facility simulation coordinator. Other essential attendees included staff from the Office of Information and Technology, facility management service, the chairs of multiple committees and individuals who engage in simulation roles.

As a result, key stakeholders understood the need for additional positions in simulation and committed to

expanding the medical center's simulation capacity by adding additional modalities, space and simulation courses.

Some of the other results of the consortium included:

- Develop/implement a DOD Simulation Fellow rotation at Martinsburg VAMC
- Develop/implement an Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS) program at the Martinsburg VAMC
- Develop/implement a simulation faculty development course
- Capacity to quickly develop future joint simulation projects/resources

As the partnership continues to grow, both the National Capital Simulation Consortium and the Martinsburg VAMC will finalize specific simulation courses, goals and objectives that mutually benefit both organizations and enhance the care of the active duty personnel and Veterans. ❖

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related events, while the other training incorporates chemical disasters that could occur.

"There is no replacement for real-world, life training, but a close runner up would definitely be a simulation," said Dr. Theodore Aquino, chief of occupational medicine at USF Health Morsani College of Medicine. Coming from a military background, Dr. Aquino has experience dealing with mass casualty scenarios.

Undergraduate nursing students from USF and UT found the disaster emergency simulations helpful in understanding how to balance the varying levels of triaging.

Dr. Brandon Dawkins, an occupational medicine student at USF, who participated in the JAHVH Sim Bus disaster simulations with USF College of Public Health, said, "This creates a situation where attempting to give a full complement of resources to a patient without proper triage may result in injury or death that could have been prevented."

Being mobile allows more people to participate in lifesaving training. Not only has the JAHVH Sim Bus reached out to national students, but recently, the trainers had the opportunity to share the simulations internationally with twelve student nurses from Scotland, who were visiting the USF College of Nursing. In addition, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida hosted the Tampa Sim Bus at an air show in March. Staff showcased the training program to the public while poised to respond in the event of an incident. Through this



(Above) Carla Brunk, RN (left), and Dr. Carol Wilson, DNP, MBA/TM, CCRN, CEN, work with Cesar Castillo, LPN, to check the mannequin for a specific trauma. (VA photo by Kevin Solomon)

type of outreach, the mobile Sim Bus is helping to engage future health care providers.

One small girl at the air show was so excited by what she learned on the bus, she returned with her little brother saying to him, "We have to fix these people, and I now know how, can you figure it out?"

So far, more than 750 people have passed through the Sim Bus doors for training – including one little girl, twice. ❖

National program helps involve medical residents in simulation techniques

By Dinesh J. John, M.D., Hospitalist; Rushikesh Shah, M.D., CRQS Debra Fisher, RN, M.S.N., Clinical Nurse Educator and Joan Mitchell, M.D., CPE, Chief of Medicine Syracuse VA Medical Center

SYRACUSE, N.Y. – The VA-Chief Residency in Quality and Safety (CRQS) is a national program established by the Office of Academic Affiliations. Its goal is to redesign medical education to include the areas of quality and patient safety.

The main focus of the CRQS for 2015-16 at the Syracuse VA Medical Center (VAMCSYR) was to establish a formal simulation program. This inter-professional initiative involved nursing, respiratory therapists and police dispatch, in addition to medical students and residents from VAMCSYR's academic affiliate, Upstate Medical University.

Drawing inspiration from other successful Lean Six Sigma methodology projects at VAMCSYR, a Lean A3 problem solving document was used for planning and implementation of this project. Adult learning theory principles¹ were utilized, and features of an ideal simulation were incorporated into the program (McGaghie et al)^{2,3}.

The project was code-named "Simulation: From Box to Bedside," in reference to the advanced life support (ALS) mannequins being in their packaging at the outset. The CRQS partnered with the education department to assemble and test the mannequins, and to also gain familiarity with the more advance versions. Scenarios were created to mimic real-life code blue events, and were piloted with medical residents during their quality elective.

These scenarios were used in two settings: the simulation lab for internal medicine residents and students, and the main medical center on various floors; announced on the overhead paging system as a regular code blue. Immediately after the scenario, the team was led through a structured debriefing using peer-to-peer feedback. Any systems issues that were identified on the floors were reported to the nursing supervisor, who reported to the Critical Care Committee.

The CRQS' year-long efforts yielded the following improvements:

- a) Improved utilization of the advanced mannequin (six times a month) and the ALS mannequin (once per month)
- b) At baseline, 20 percent of participants felt "comfortable" or "very comfortable" participating in a live code blue scenario,



(Above) Rushikesh Shah, M.D. (third from left) and Mustafa Awayda, M.D. (far right), explain the features of an advanced simulation mannequin to medical residents at the VA Medical Center, Syracuse, New York. (Left to right) Aashrai Gudlavalleti, Harvir Gambhir, Dr. Shah, Vivian Chan, Sakshi Dutta, Kavita Mannava and Dr. Awayda. (VA photo by Dr. Dinesh John)

- c) At baseline, 23 percent of participants felt comfortable pointing out an advanced cardiac life support protocol breach, which improved to 60 percent at the end of the academic year
- d) Reporting of systems issues to the Critical Care Committee led to replacement of faulty equipment, addition of end tidal carbon dioxide monitors in the crash cart and a standardized format for announcing code blue events on the overhead paging system

Sustainability planning includes training the incoming CRQS, and formal simulation training at SimLEARN for physician and nursing staff. In addition, VAMCSYR recently received its basic level SimLEARN certification, which provides a robust framework to track simulation resources and activities.

The CRQS at VAMCSYR has been able to engage the medical residents and students at VAMCSYR at an unprecedented level, and they have expressed their excitement about this program.

To our knowledge, this is the first instance of a CRQS setting up a simulation program from "box to bedside." VA-CRQS currently has 82 positions spread across 55 medical centers, and these capable young physicians can be a tremendous asset in the deployment of simulation activities on a national scale. ❖

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San Francisco VA simulation fellow wins award for SAEM presentation

By Gerald Sonnenberg
EES Senior Marketing and Communication Specialist

SAN FRANCISCO – Jesse Manton, DDS, recently completed his simulation fellowship with the San Francisco Veterans Affairs Medical Center. In May, he attended the Society for Academic Emergency Medicine (SAEM) in New Orleans to make a presentation on the emergency dental training he helped develop. The Medical Emergency Management in the Dental Office (MEMDO) training curriculum had been gaining national acknowledgment and support over the last few months and was selected for oral presentation at the event. Manton was nominated to make the presentation.

The MEMDO curriculum consists of advanced training for medical emergency management in the dental office, part of a spectrum of dental simulation programs being developed and utilized for dental student and resident simulation-based education. This novel curriculum is evidence-based and implements a combination of monthly virtual conferences, didactic seminars, part-task skills training and in place simulation.

Current dental school medical emergency certification in the U.S. is limited to basic life support, even though literature indicates that the incidence of a cardiac arrest requiring cardiopulmonary resuscitation in a dental office is one of the least likely emergencies to occur, with an incidence ranging from .001-.011 cases per dentist per year. This data was a call for a tailored training program to arm dentists with the skills and knowledge necessary to manage the most common medical emergencies in dental offices, such as syncope, seizure, hypoglycemia, asthma attack and anaphylaxis.

"After the last few presentations concluded, the Sim Academy leaders convened to make closing remarks and to determine award winners from the numerous fellow presentations that had been given. I was astounded to hear my name called as the Simulation Fellow Presentation Award runner-up, and I humbly received an engraved wall plaque from the leadership team," said Manton. "What an eye opening year," he said about his fellowship experience.

"Coming from a dental background, my whole concept of

simulation in health care changed. I really enjoyed the interdisciplinary nature of the program and the opportunity to take an educator role for my dental, medical and nursing colleagues. I could not have had a better opportunity to learn and grow prior to beginning my anesthesiology residency, and I'm thankful for having an amazing team of dedicated colleagues to help make the program a success. I know that simulation will be an integral part of my future practice, teaching role and research for my career." ❖

Staffing your simulation center by leveraging the strength of students

By Cynthia Shum DNP, MEd, RN, CHSE-A
Simulation Nurse Educator; and Bryan Provax, BA
Simulation Center Pathways Intern
VA Palo Alto Healthcare System

PALO ALTO, Calif. – Many VA medical centers conduct simulation to some degree, and SimLEARN has distributed simulation equipment across the U.S. Sometimes, however, the bigger issue for a facility is figuring out how to staff a simulation-based education program and get as much use out of the equipment as possible.

The Palo Alto Division (PAD) of the Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System (VAPAHCS) has had a devoted simulation space for more than 20 years. It's only been within the past five years they have had a dedicated simulation nurse educator responsible for the day-to-day operations, in-center and in-situ simulations, purchasing, procurement and administrative duties of the growing program. In the interim, the simulation program engaged the Pathways program and hired a graduate student.

There is a misperception that simulation centers must hire people with health care backgrounds and experience with simulation and technical abilities. Though this is ideal, there are other options worth exploring. Pathways interns provide a unique opportunity for simulation programs.

The Pathways program is a government program for college students to work as student trainee interns within the public sector health care system with potential for permanent conversion. An intern starts at a GS-4 or 5 level of pay and generally does not exceed one year of work. Their hours are flexible, and they are not required to work 40-hours per week. Participating as a Pathways intern for a simulation program is applicable to health care students. However, other areas of study may also benefit from this program. Additionally, the VAPAHCS will soon have a new center with almost 10,000 square feet of space for training, and there are plans to hire a simulation technician and administrator.

The PAD's first intern is pursuing a master's in public administration. In aligning with their interests and abilities, this person is working on policies and procedures for the center.

Making use of students within a simulation program is a low-cost solution to acquiring extra help and creates a win/win situation by exposing them to the public sector of health care administration. They are able to manage the daily operations of the equipment, support simulation scenarios and operate equipment and more. It's time to think outside-the-box and get creative with staffing solutions. ❖



Nominations open for annual under secretary for health's simulation awards program

By Gerald Sonnenberg
EES Marketing and Communication

ORLANDO, Fla. – The VHA SimLEARN program recently announced a call for nominations for the 2016 Under Secretary for Health's Awards Program for Excellence in Clinical Simulation Training, Education and Research. These awards recognize executive leadership, clinical practice, simulation champions and REI champions that have significantly contributed to VHA's mission of providing outstanding clinical simulation training to the community and who have supported and advanced VHA's strategic plan.

The VHA SimLEARN awards program includes four awards:

- The Excellence in Clinical Simulation Training, Education and Research Executive Leadership Award
- The Excellence in Clinical Simulation Training, Education and Research Practice Award
- The Excellence in Clinical Simulation Training, Education and Research Champion Award
- The Excellence in Clinical Simulation Training, Education and Research Champion Award for the Resuscitation Education Initiative (REI)

The annual awards program was established to promote and advance system-wide progress of VHA goals, objectives and strategies for the deployment of clinical simulation to improve the quality of health care for Veterans.

Please visit the [Simulation Awards](#) page on the SimLEARN website to view award criteria and how to submit the nominations. Each award requires its own specific nomination form, as well as a [Form VA0235](#) for submission.

Nominations will be accepted through Nov. 30. ❖

VHA training opportunities available at National Simulation Center in FY17

ORLANDO, Fla. – SimLEARN is announcing the approval of several courses for fiscal year 2017. These courses include: SimLEARN Clinical Code Team Simulation Instructor training; Out of Operating Room Airway Management (OORAM) training; Simulation, Technology, Operations, Maintenance and Practices (STOMP) training; and Introduction to Clinical Simulation training. These courses combine didactic, small group and hands-on simulation activities.

The use of simulation is gaining wider acceptance in health care education, and due to the emergence of simulation as a tool for clinical education, there is a need for clinicians experienced in simulation education at VA health care facilities.

More information about each course and other courses is available on the SimLEARN Course Catalog [here](#). ❖

VHA facilities with simulation certifications

ORLANDO, Fla. – SimLEARN staff award new simulation certifications to qualified facilities twice each year; in June and December. Facility certifications last for two years and are renewable. They are a distinctive accomplishment.

There are three tiers of certification: basic, intermediate and advanced. Below is the full list of certified facilities with new facilities in **red**.

Advanced Certification

- **Dayton VAMC - Ohio**
- Durham VAMC - North Carolina
- Minneapolis VA Health Care System (VAHCS), Minnesota
- Pittsburgh VAMC, Pennsylvania
- San Francisco VAHCS, California
- Southern Arizona VAHCS, Tucson, Arizona

Intermediate Certification

- Cincinnati VAMC, Ohio
- VA Eastern Kansas HCS, Topeka, Kansas
- James A. Haley Veterans Hospital, Tampa, Florida
- Michael E. DeBakey VAMC, Houston, Texas
- VA Nebraska-Western Iowa HCS, Omaha, Nebraska
- Sacramento VAMC, California
- Salem VAMC, Virginia

Basic Certification

- Boise VAMC, Idaho
- VA Central California HCS, Fresno, California
- **Charlie Norwood VAMC, Augusta, Georgia**
- Chillicothe VAMC, Chillicothe, Ohio
- VA Connecticut HCS, Newington, Connecticut
- Fargo VA Health Care System, North Dakota
- Grand Junction VAMC, Colorado
- **Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans Hospital, Columbia, Missouri**
- Iowa City VAMC, Iowa
- Jesse Brown VAMC, Chicago, Illinois
- **John J. Pershing VAMC, Poplar Bluff, Missouri**
- **Lexington VAMC, Kentucky**
- Memphis VAMC, Tennessee
- National Center for Patient Safety, Ann Arbor, Michigan
- VA Northern Indiana HCS, Fort Wayne, Indiana
- VA North Texas HCS, Dallas, Texas
- **Olin E. Teague Veterans Medical Center, Temple, Texas**
- **VA Portland HCS, Oregon**
- Providence VAMC, Rhode Island
- VA Puget Sound HCS, Tacoma, Washington
- VA Roseburg HCS, Oregon
- VA Caribbean HCS, San Juan, Puerto Rico
- Sheridan VAHCS, Wyoming
- Sioux Falls VAHCS, South Dakota
- St. Cloud VAHCS, Minnesota
- **Syracuse VAMC, New York**
- **William Jennings Bryan Dorn VAMC, Columbia, South Carolina**

A facility may request certification after one year of existence while meeting the basic level criteria. A non-binding email of intent and certification application is required. Please contact the team by sending an email to [EES Facility Simulation Certification](#). ❖