



VHA Holds Simulation Conference for Leadership

By *SimLEARN Staff*



Photo by Tim Walsh

Assisted by Dr. Anil Krishnamurthy, Barry Sharp, Medical Center Director at the Iowa City VAMC, performs laparoscopic surgical techniques using an integration of 3D computer imagery and haptic simulated system.

SimLEARN and the Employee Education System (EES) hosted the Simulation National Leadership Conference Sept. 14 – 16 in New Orleans. Approximately 250 leaders from throughout the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) attended the conference which promoted the use of simulation in clinical training.

Over the three day conference, attendees:

- Listened to VHA speakers and subject matter experts from outside the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
- Participated in hands-on simulation learning opportunities during several breakout sessions
- Learned about how other facilities in VHA are implementing simulation during the poster session
- Communicated their local simulation needs

Dr. Robert Jesse, Principle Deputy Under Secretary for Health, kicked off the conference Sept. 14. Dr. Jesse framed the opening of his presentation against the historical model of medical education: See one, do one, teach one. Traditionally, students would observe a medical procedure, they would attempt it, and if

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SimLEARN Names National Director of Nursing Programs

By *SimLEARN Staff*

Lygia Arcaro, MSN, MHA, RN, BC was recently named National Director of Nursing Programs for the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Simulation Learning Education and Research Network (SimLEARN) Program. In this role, she will serve as a member of the leadership team working



Lygia Arcaro, MSN, MHA, RN, BC

with a multidisciplinary team of clinicians and educators to develop learning opportunities for staff using state-of-the-art simulation learning technology for the VA.

Ms. Arcaro is a member of the International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation and Learning, the Society for Simulation in Healthcare, and the Florida Nurses Association. She was a past president of the Nevada Nurses Association, and was an active member of the American Nurses Association's Congress of Nursing

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SIMULATION NATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

VHA Holds Simulation Conference for Leadership

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Photo by Tim Walsb

Dr. Jesse addresses conference attendees regarding the increased use of simulation in clinical training.

successful, they would then teach it to others.

He explained, unfortunately, this was not in the best interest of the patients. But several things are driving change in medical education. The new reality involves shorter training cycles, patients' rights, and a greater focus on quality and outcomes.

Dr. Jesse outlined reasons for why simulation presents the most viable solution for medical education in this new reality:

- The emergence of new simulation techniques and technologies
- Broad support for simulation
- Rapid adoption due to effectiveness

During his talk, Dr. Jesse explored why the VA should adopt simulation as a program for medical education. He cited the need for consistency across the spectrum of VA systems, preventing duplication of efforts, and the need for sustainability in educational initiatives. SimLEARN is a direct result of these ideas. In fact, one of the main goals of SimLEARN is to become a national leader in simulation based medical education (SBME).

"The VA wants to be ahead of the curve" and the VA will always be present at the table when simulation

developments are going on, Dr. Jesse remarked. "SimLEARN is how we will do this."

In closing, Dr. Jesse encouraged the leadership to provide input on what they think should be prioritized in the VA's proactively toward SBME, urging "it's a tremendous opportunity for all of us." ❖

SimLEARN Names National Director of Nursing Programs

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Practice's Standards and Guidelines Committee for eight years. In addition, she holds a national certification in Nursing Professional Development, and served as one of VHA's Veterans Integrated Service Network SimLEARN champions.

Ms. Arcaro began her VA career as a Quality Assurance trainee at the West Los Angeles VA Medical Center (VAMC) and has over 20 years of dedicated service. She worked in Nursing Education positions at the West Los Angeles and Las Vegas VAMCs and transitioned to the position of Facility Education Coordinator at the Las Vegas VAMC. Heading east to the Richmond VAMC, she served in the role of Associate Chief Nurse for Education. Ms. Arcaro served as the founding Chief of Education and the Designated Learning Officer at the Orlando VAMC prior to being selected for the SimLEARN position. She has received numerous awards throughout her many years of VA service, including recognition from the Southern Nevada Federal Executive Association, and the March of Dimes (Nevada) for her professional contributions.

Ms. Arcaro received her diploma from St. Vincent's Hospital School of Nursing in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and later received her undergraduate degree in Nursing from Western Connecticut State College. She earned her graduate degree in Nursing from Clarkson College and is currently completing doctoral work at Touro University International located in Cypress, California. In addition, Ms. Arcaro is a graduate of Leadership VA, the VHA Health Care Leadership Institute, and the VHA Executive Career Field Program. ❖



LeAnn Schlamb discusses her poster presentation “Using Simulation to Assess New Employees’ Skills and Critical Thinking” with a conference attendee.

Best of Show from the Poster Sessions

By SimLEARN Staff

At the SimLEARN hosted Simulation National Leadership Conference for VHA leadership held Sept. 14 – 16, conference attendees had the opportunity to participate in thought-provoking discussion with innovative VHA simulation educators in the conference poster session. The session featured 22 posters, crossing multiple disciplines and facilities. Ms. Lee Ann Schlamb, RN, MSN, with Education Services at VAMC Cincinnati with VISN 10, won the poster “Best in Show” for her presentation, titled “Using Simulation to Assess New Employees’ Skills and Critical Thinking.”

Ms. Schlamb integrated simulation into new employee orientation, by using assessment simulations after new employees complete classroom

orientation. The simulations provide an opportunity to consolidate new knowledge and skills before application on the job, fostering an environment of patient safety. Part of the assessment introduces new or unfamiliar equipment in order to familiarize new employees prior to caring for Veteran patients.

Novice nurses or registered nurses new to a facility and/or to the type of patients benefit from the practical learning that simulation provides. Using simulation, new and current employees can complete



Louise Van Diepen (right), Deputy Chief Learning Officer, and Dr. Paula Molloy (left), SimLEARN National Program Manager, present LeAnn Schlamb (center) with an award for best in show.

position-specific competencies in a safe environment. At the beginning of the simulation experience, the nursing employees reflect on their abilities to perform identified skills and competencies. In addition to providing nursing employees the opportunity to develop and display competencies with new equipment, the simulation assessment uses iSTAN and Nursing Kelly to:

- Involve critical thinking using a brief scenario with debriefing to identify abnormal vital signs, and/or arrhythmias
- Identify rapid response situations
- Develop diagnostic skills, proficiencies, and critical thinking
- Use Situation Background Assessment Response (SBAR) communication and hand-off communication

Upon completing the simulation experience, the new employees and the educators have the opportunity to provide feedback regarding completion of skills and any areas of weaknesses. This enables the instructor or manager to provide individualized orientation experiences for each new employee. Positive feedback from new employees and nurse managers during the past 12 months indicates the success of the simulation program. ❖

For more information about the poster session, visit <http://www.simlearn.va.gov/conf2010/confPost.asp>.



Photo by Tim Walsh

Dr. Geraldine Bednash, CEO and Executive Director of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, addresses attendees at the Simulation National Leadership Conference.

Simulation Experts Outside VHA Present at Conference

By SimLEARN Staff

Speakers representing universities, medical and professional associations, and the Department of Defense joined VHA simulation experts at the Simulation National Leadership Conference held Sept. 14 – 16. With such a diverse group sharing the stage, a broad range of clinical simulation was offered, and the future of simulation was a recurring theme among several of the presentations.

Dr. Ajit Sachdeva, Director of the Education Division with the American College of Surgeons (ACS) presented “Verification of Competence and Accreditation of Simulation Centers: Unique Opportunities to Shape the Future of Health Care.” During his presentation, Dr. Sachdeva reviewed the standards and criteria for ACS accreditation. He also stressed the use

of simulation for assessment. “The worst performers think they are the best,” he explained. “Simulation is critical at giving accurate feedback.”

In “The Future of Simulation in Developing a Professional Workforce,” Dr. Geraldine Bednash, Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, discussed the changing landscape of nursing education and simulation. She noted the disparity in resource availability between nursing programs, and discussed how this impacts support for curricula- that integrate simulation.

Dr. Bednash also discussed the importance of simulation-based education for interdisciplinary teams, and advocated for institutional cooperation to fully leverage simulation expertise and capabilities.

“Partnership, partnership, partnership is absolutely essential.”

Army Maj. Thomas B. Talbot, MD, Portfolio Manager for Medical Modeling, Simulation and Training Telemedicine and Advanced Technology Research Center (TATRC), provided a Defense Department perspective in “DoD Strategic Review: Where We Are, Where We Are Going.”

Dr. Talbot summarized TATRC’s approach to simulation, which analyzes the gaps between what is present and what is possible, anticipates challenges, and imagines the future possibilities ahead of requirements. He looks forward to human-machine interfaces that are location- and context- sensitive; that sense a user’s physical motion, facial expressions, and tone-of-voice; and portray increased graphical realism and increased “emotion.” Such advances will be instrumental in propelling the continual evolution of simulation based clinical education.

Dr. William McGaghie, Director of Evaluation at Northwestern University Clinical and Translational Science Institute at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, presented “Current Research of Simulation and Transferability to Practice.” Dr. McGaghie examined the latest research demonstrating the transfer of learning from clinical simulation to practice, and presented a multi-tiered model that considers learning mastery, quality of patient care, and

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patient outcomes. Through several examples, Dr. McGaghie connected the use of clinical simulation training for improving patient care.

Dr. Elizabeth Hunt, Director of the Johns Hopkins Medicine Simulation Center in Baltimore, presented “Medical Simulation: A Virtual Tour through one Hospital’s Usage of Medical Simulation to Improve the Quality of Care Our Patients Receive.” Dr. Hunt covered a variety of simulation equipment and discussed real world applications for clinical simulation education. A joint presentation, by Drs. Kyle Harrison and Geoff Lighthall of the Palo Alto VAMC, stressed the importance of debriefing. Their presentation, “From Beginning to End: Wrapping Up the Simulation Package with Debriefing,” highlighted the benefits of quality and thorough debriefing. They also

included useful tips and advice for debriefing facilitators.

Morgan Passiment, Director of Information Resources Outreach for the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), discussed a recent fielded AAMC survey regarding the use of simulation in medical education during her presentation, “2010 Inventory of Simulation Activities at North American Medical Schools and Teaching Hospitals.” Ms. Passiment reviewed AAMC and its priorities, then explained the need for a simulation inventory of AAMC member intuitions – much like the survey SimLEARN fielded to more than 170 VHA healthcare facilities. The AAMC final report is expected in late 2010. ❖

To view these and other conference presentations, visit <http://www.simlearn.va.gov/conf2010/>.



Photo by Tim Walsh

Army Maj. Thomas B. Talbot, MD, discusses the use of simulation in the Department of Defense.



Upcoming SimLEARN Events

VHA Clinical Simulation Conference

The VHA SimLEARN program is hosting a simulation conference for VHA clinicians in conjunction with the Society for Simulation in Healthcare’s 2011 International Meeting on Simulation in Healthcare. The VHA conference will look at large-scale simulation education implementations, and each VHA facility may send two clinicians to attend. The conference will take place Jan. 24 in New Orleans.

VISN Simulation Instructor Training

The VA Palo Alto Health Care System and the SimLEARN Program will offer clinical simulation instructor training in March and April, 2011, at Palo Alto. The introductory course is designed for new and aspiring simulation instructors. Each Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) will be invited to send two individuals to attend the 2.5 day course.

Simulation National Leadership Conference

Exhibit Hall Offers Inspiration and Hands-on Activity

By SimLEARN Staff

In the VHA Simulation National Leadership Conference exhibit hall, participants had a chance to go in-depth in their areas of interest, specialty, or practice. Instead of simply browsing the vendor booths, the exhibitors and participants used the exhibit hall as a learning exchange. Exhibitors' equipment ranged from low to high fidelity, from realistic and responsive mannequins to integrated computerized multi-tasking media, and exhibitors were on hand to answer questions.

Women Veterans' health was one notable area addressed in the exhibit hall. Practitioners use the entire inventory of simulation equipment and techniques for the growing population of women discharged from the service. Women Veterans have healthcare needs different from those of a traditionally male Veteran population, ranging from obstetric needs to counseling services. Simulation tools that addressed these needs were available for participants to try. Patient safety was an underlying theme across the exhibits in the hall. The goal of simulation, and the reason the exhibitors were present, was to underscore for attendees that opportunities for meaningful and practical simulation based medical education can take place without harm to the patient. ❖



Photo by Tim Walsh

An attendee had hands-on use of simulation equipment. The photo insert is a video display showing the interior of the device.

VISNs Discuss Shared Realities of Simulation

By SimLEARN Staff

While the purpose of the Simulation National Leadership Conference was to impart information to VHA leadership, it was also an opportunity for a discussion about the status of simulation at the VISN and local level. Conference attendees broke out by VISN to discuss their unique clinical issues and clinical simulation training priorities. VISNs also identified common 'enablers' and 'gaps.' Enablers include location near a university, working with affiliates, strong enthusiasm for simulation and currently existing simulation programs, while a lack of simulationists, equipment, space and funding



were identified as gaps. SimLEARN staff will review and validate information from the VISN break out session, and use that information to better focus VHA's simulation effort. ❖

Simulation Up Close: Part One

Horizons in Medicine Students Learn About Simulation

Steven C. McCullar and Dr. Rosalyn P. Scott
Dayton VA Medical Center, Dayton, Ohio



Photo by Ray Kummer

Dr. Rosalyn Scott assists Brianna Miller, Horizons in Medicine Intern 2010, with a simulation device.

Twenty high school students from the Horizons in Medicine program at Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine recently visited the Simulation Lab at the Dayton VAMC. They share an “up close and personal” experience with the latest cutting-edge simulation-based technologies used in training healthcare professionals.

For the past 32 years, Horizons in Medicine has offered local high school students, mainly from disadvantaged and minority backgrounds, the opportunity to learn about career possibilities in health care and the kind of serious preparation needed to enter such careers. Since 1979, more than 600 Dayton-area high school students have completed Horizons in Medicine, with more than 90 percent entering college and approximately 80 percent graduating from college. Several staff members at the Dayton VAMC are graduates of the program.

During their visit, the students first learned a little about VA’s history. None of the students, all of whom were born in Dayton, had known that in 1865, Abraham Lincoln authorized the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, which established an “asylum” (later called Soldier’s Home) in Dayton.

The Soldier’s Home became a part of the Veteran’s Administration in 1930 when the agency was created. It is the third oldest VA facility in the country.

Students rotated through a variety of stations, including blood pressure measurement; digital retinal imaging; full-size physiologic mannequins, which they had to interview and examine; and endovascular, endoscopic, laparoscopic and arthroscopic trainers. Volunteer instructors included staff physicians, physician assistants, nurses and the medical center librarian. Faculty encouraged questions about the different health professions and training needed for each. Dr. Scott, Associate Chief of Staff for Medical Education and Director of Simulation at the Dayton VA, ended the program with a talk about her own career and the exciting opportunities available to health professionals in direct patient care, teaching, research and leadership.

This was the first visit by Horizons in Medicine to the medical center and the first community service event for the Simulation Lab. Steven C. McCullar, Administrative Officer for Dayton VA Research & Development, coordinated this successful event. He is preparing for his own journey to medical school and has benefited from a program similar to Horizons in Medicine, the Ronald E. McNair Scholars program. ❖



Photo by Ray Kummer

High school students participating in the Horizons in Medicine program practice taking each other’s blood pressure.

Photo by Tim Walsh



Conference attendees get hands on experience with a mannequin during a breakout session.

Simulation: Up Close and Personal – Part Two

Participants at the conference experienced simulation first-hand during the break-out sessions. In smaller groups, they moved through a series of small labs and demonstration areas to learn about some of the different simulation modalities available. This quick succession of overviews included virtual patients, standardized patients, task trainers and mannequin-based simulation. Equipment



Photo by Tim Walsh

Dr. Elizabeth Hunt (far right) walks conference participants through a clinical scenario.

ranged from low fidelity body parts to high fidelity mannequins with integrated physiological models.

For example, Patricia Burnell exhibited an inexpensive inflatable torso used by healthcare personnel to stay practiced

in CPR skills. Drs. Elizabeth Hunt and Kristen Nelson-McMillen took participants

on a tour of a fully integrated mannequin with respiratory and cardio-pulmonary systems, dilating pupils, and vocalization capabilities. With help from conference participants, they also used the high-fidelity mannequin to run through a critical emergency room simulation.

Dr. Anil Krishnamurthy demonstrated laparoscopic surgical techniques using an integration of 3D computer imagery and a haptic simulation task trainer. He pointed out that the strength of such integrated simulation is its ability to teach basic skills, as well as to aid in diagnostic training. To heighten realism, “patient” verbal responses to painful errors can be programmed into the simulation.

Dr. Rosalyn Scott pointed out the additional advantages of having augmented reality functions available on the computer monitor, such as an anatomical map superimposed on an x-ray, to boost the instructional effectiveness for the learner. Other presenters included Drs. Salma Akram, Dmitriy Babichanko, Pamela Baugham, Bruce Binder, Jerome Borchers, Briar Duffy, Larry Goldenberg, Kyle Harrison, Jonathan Heart, Teppituk Krinchai, Geoff Lighthall, Alberto Lopez, Jo-Anne Suffoletto and Jessica Zagory. ♦

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To learn more about
clinical simulation, visit
www.simlearn.va.gov



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