

Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine

FREE* Newsletter

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(CSRPS)

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Quote of the Month

"The proper route to an understanding of the world is an examination of our errors about it" (Errol Morris).

"Let's take flight simulation...if you're trying to train a pilot, you can simulate almost the entire course...you don't have to get into an airplane until late in the process" (Roy Romer)

Simulation in Health Care (Round 2)

In July 2014, I wrote about the growing use of simulation-based training (SBT) in health care systems, and why this learning approach is so valuable (link to it here, http://medicine.vtc.vt.edu/faculty_affairs/professional_development/).

So, why am I writing about simulation again? Well, for two reasons. One, I think it is important to clarify that simulation is not solely an educational technique used to train medical students and residents. While it certainly is critically important in that regard (as emphasized in the accreditation standards that guide such training), simulation is not simply an "educational" issue. It is also an urgent patient safety and care quality issue. In an outstanding recent book entitled ***Building a Culture of Patient Safety Through Simulation***,¹ a team of authors describe how the rapid assimilation of simulation helped transform a major academic health center into a learning organization. Here are a couple of quotes from the book that illustrate the point:

- "...Simulation can be central to a form of 'systems integration' that can positively impact an entire organization...[accredited simulation programs] demonstrate consistent, planned, collaborative, integrative and iterative application of simulation-based assessment and teaching activities **with the aim of achieving excellent bedside care, enhanced patient safety and improved metrics across the health care system.**"
- "We all talk about learning organizations and the need to train our people to create a safe culture. **The simulation center and the deep science that now lie behind it enabled North Shore-LJJ to achieve [it]**...the simulation center itself, while very impressive, is only bricks and mortar. It takes a senior-level commitment across a gigantic system like North Shore-LJJ to turn this simulation center into the 'paradigm buster' that it has become."

Simulation technology is, of course, expensive. But the "payoff" as measured by better patient outcomes, reduced error rates and significant cost avoidance makes it an essential investment. For those and many other reasons, most academic systems are growing their simulation programs rapidly.

Two, our health system is currently contemplating whether to make a major investment in expanding our current simulation facilities. In my view, it is absolutely critical that we do so. If you agree, I would urge you to speak with your department chair about this ASAP. Clinical department chairs, in particular, will have influence on the final decision. Thank you!

David W. Musick, PhD

¹Gallo K. and Smith LG. Building a Culture of Patient Safety Through Simulation: An Interprofessional Learning Model. New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2005.

Our offices have moved! We are now located in the Riverside 1 building, 4th floor. Please note our new office phone number **highlighted** to the left. Staff phone numbers have been updated in the Outlook email directory. Come and see us anytime you are in the neighborhood!