

New center trains military trauma medics

Scottsdale Healthcare unit simulates critical situations

By Diana Balazs

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Scottsdale Healthcare Osborn Medical Center has opened a \$1.6 million military trauma-training center.

Physicians, surgeons, nurses and other medical personnel not only receive classroom instruction but also high-tech, hands-on training using lifelike medical dummies as patients, said Jerry Zabokrtsky, Scottsdale Healthcare's director of military affairs, emergency preparedness and forensic nurse examiners.

The 7,500-square-foot center at 7301 E. Fourth St. is just west of the Osborn hospital, a Level 1 trauma center. It replaces a smaller facility at the Greenbaum Surgery Center, 3535 N. Scottsdale Road.

Funding came from a congressional appropriation as part of the 2009 fiscal year Defense Appropriation Bill.

Phoenix-based Hensel Phelps Construction Co. began construction in June, gutting and remodeling the building. Blake Christian, Hensel Phelps area superintendent, said crews even helped install a 30-foot-tall flagpole in the center's courtyard.

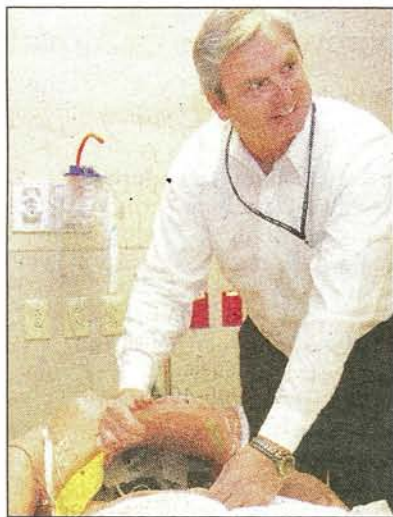
"It's a great purpose," Christian said. "It's very, very good to be part of something like that."

The new center has six trauma bays, including one room with two beds in it. Red lighting is used to simulate nighttime conditions.

"We can set up for multiple scenarios now, and we can run more people through," Zabokrtsky said.

Trainees practice on medical dummies known as human-patient simulators. Depending on the model, they can talk, bleed, breathe and cry.

Since 2004, Scottsdale Healthcare has trained about 900 military personnel and expects to train an-



Jerry Zabokrtsky demonstrates on a medical dummy, some of which can talk, bleed, breathe and cry.



Air Force nurses (above) are in the first class at the trauma-training facility near Scottsdale Healthcare Osborn. The students practice on medical dummies (right) to prepare for the challenges of war-zone medicine.



PHOTOS BY DIANA PAYAN/THE REPUBLIC

other 400 in the next fiscal year, Zabokrtsky said.

Scottsdale Healthcare is hosting its first class in the new facility, 25 Air Force nurses participating in a nine-week program. The center also is available for civilian paramedic and firefighter training.

"Not only can they come here, but we're going to build a vehicle that's going to be a mobile simulation lab on wheels. We're going to take this vehicle out to the community," Zabokrtsky said.

Zabokrtsky, 44, of Mesa, retired as a master sergeant after 21 years in the Air Force. His last tour was in Iraq, where two friends died when their Humvee was blown up. Zabokrtsky said the medical training is vital.

"We train our medics to go over there, and our success rate bringing people back is around 94 to 98 percent now. It's a lot bigger than it was in Vietnam," Zabokrtsky said.

His wife, Deedra, is a lieutenant colonel who oversees the Air Force Nurse Transition Program at Scottsdale Healthcare. The 18-year veteran said it provides critical military hospital training.

"The Air Force has recognized

that programs like this one here at Scottsdale Healthcare are providing better training in faster amounts of time," she said.

Lt. Foye Flowers, 35, who is among the nursing students, has served for 16 years, including time as a medic, calls the facility a great learning environment.

"It is very realistic and very lifelike," Flowers said of the training. Student Derrick Jones, 36, a second lieutenant, who has been in the Air Force for 13 years, said that he is "just in awe to be here at this magnificent facility."

"Being able to get the experi-

ences that I have, you just can't beat it," Jones said.

Samantha Stapleton, 22, also a second lieutenant, who joined the Air Force a few months ago, calls the realistic training conditions invaluable.

"It's amazing. We can create very critical situations where we're taking vulnerable patient populations, and we can run these over and over with never actually putting a real patient at threat," she said. "If mistakes are made, it becomes a learning experience, and it's not detrimental to an actual patient."

Military training program

» Opened 2004 at Scottsdale Healthcare Osborn Medical Center, 7400 E. Osborn Road.

» About 900 personnel have completed trauma training.

» Participating military branches include U.S. Air Force, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, Army Reserve, Army National Guard.

» Units from Arizona, Arkansas, California, Hawaii, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, Washington and Texas have trained at Osborn.

» Military physicians, nurses, medics, operating-room technicians, pharmacy techs, lab techs, respiratory therapists, physical therapists, mental-health professionals and logistics personnel have received training. Training also is available for civilian paramedics and firefighters.

» Scottsdale Healthcare's disaster-response and trauma-training program is a national model for other hospitals and military bases.

» Scottsdale Healthcare is Arizona's first hospital approved to join the federal Medical Reserve Corps. The unit includes medical and public-health professionals and others who volunteer to help prepare for and respond to natural disasters and emergencies.