

Healthcare training emphasizes real-world situations

By Darrell Shandrow

A Scottsdale Healthcare program trains military doctors, nurses, technicians, paramedics and firefighters to treat people injured in battles and natural disasters from Afghanistan to Iraq to Haiti.

Clinical director Randy Derr said the training emphasizes a real-world approach through the use of simulated scenarios and the treatment of trauma patients in a hospital's intensive care unit.

He said the use of simulation provides training opportunities not typically found in a brief tour of a hospital's various departments.

"The idea here is not just to see the skills, but also to practice the skills," Derr said.

"In a simulation lab we can have you train in a threat-free environment where, if you haven't done it in a couple of years and what you did may have realistically killed a patient, it's better to kill our simulator."

Simulation technician C.J. Cowart demonstrated the star of the show, a life-

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Scottsdale Healthcare's program stars the Human Patient Simulator. The dummy helps train for many situations.

Military

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like male mannequin about 6 ft. known as a Human Patient Simulator.

"He can bleed or cry and his pupils dilate," Cowart said. "You can see his chest rising and falling and hear him breathing."

Cowart said the simulator responds to medical treatment.

"His lungs can be collapsed and he reacts to that," Cowart said. "You can insert a chest tube. If the correct procedure was done, he'll get better."

Derr said the training is based on scripted scenarios that come as a surprise to the students.

"One of the first questions we get is 'Before we start the simulation, can I get a look around to figure out where everything's at?' and the answer is 'no' because when you get off the plane in Bagram or Balad, there are people who literally dump their stuff in their room and get right to work," Derr said.

Cowart said the simulated scenarios test the ability of everyone in the room to cope with burns, gunshots and other traumatic wounds commonly seen on the battlefield.

"In the final scenario, we take off the simulator's leg," he said. "When they come in and they look at that amputation, we've got it all bloodied up."

"The average medic will go 'eww'."

Cowart said the wounds are custom designed to look as real as possible.

"Small tubes are run under the simulator's plastic skin. They can be filled with fluid that looks like blood," he said.

Painted wounds made of silicone are placed on the simulator's body to appear realistic."

Cowart said the simulation training is focused on a team work model developed by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and the Department of Defense.

"Team Steps is a way of communicating between doctors, nurses, technicians and whoever is in the room," Cowart said. "If you hear the doctor order a medication you know is not right for the patient, it's your obligation to step up and say it."

"The nurses have to be trained how to talk to the doctors and the doctors need to be trained how to listen."

Derr said ongoing philanthropic support for the program is important.

"There are a lot of people here who have money to donate to causes they find important to them," he said. "You'd be hard pressed to find somebody who hasn't been touched in some way by Iraq and Afghanistan. Everyone knows people who are going over there."

"So, if I have the means to assist in making sure that the medical community is as prepared as possible to go over there and support those warriors, then that's a great place to put my money."

Derr said the program is moving to a new 7,500 sq. ft. Scottsdale Healthcare Military Training Center in January.

"We will have more simulators and six training rooms," he said.