



NEWS RELEASE
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SimMan Brings a Healthy Dose of Reality to Emergency Training

-- Air St. Luke's trains emergency responders with high-tech patient simulator --

Boise – He breathes, he cries, moans in pain, and can even die if something goes terribly wrong. Say hello to SimMan the new generation of patient simulators.

SimMan is the newest addition to Air St. Luke's Regional Education and Simulation Lab (REAL).

The Air St. Luke's REAL program travels throughout Idaho to train a wide variety of medical personnel everyone from hospital nurses to first responders on simulated emergency situations using either SimMan or SimBaby mannequins.

Air St. Luke's purchased the two mannequins early last year for a total cost of \$45,000 each. Funding for the REAL program is 100 percent funded through the sale of Air St. Luke's memberships.

SimMan is manufactured by the same Norway-based company that brought the world Resuci Anne, which since 1960 has been the mannequin most used to realistically teach CPR.

SimMan takes reality to an even higher level. A full-body simulator, SimMan is able to respond to medical just as a real patient would.

"The advantage to using SimMan is that it allows caregivers the experience of working on a real patient without risk," said Tammye Erdmann, RN, coordinator of the Air St. Luke's Simulation Program. "But at the same time it allows them to

experience the adverse medical consequences that take place during a critical event when proper treatment methods aren't used."

How SimMan responds to treatment is determined by a trainer who controls SimMan's reactions from either a computer or portable computing device.

The sophisticated computer program makes it possible for SimMan to breathe, talk, and generate heart, breath and bowel sounds. Caregivers can also check blood pressure, insert chest and airway tubes, insert IV fluids and even shock SimMan with a defibrillator.

"The realism is quite extraordinary," Erdmann said. "Successful training with a simulator is most successful when those participating don't believe it's a simulator and with SimMan it's easy to forget that he isn't real."

What's unique about SimMan is that it can be programmed to respond to treatment just as a human patient would.

"Although we hope to end the simulations on a positive note, we can't ignore mistakes and there have been instances when SimMan has died," she said.

A 2000 Institute of Medicine Report estimated that between 44,000 and 98,000 Americans die each year from preventable medical mistakes. The report found that medical error is the eighth leading cause of death topping such things as breast cancer, AIDS and homicide.

The best way to avoid mistakes is through training and practice, but Erdmann said that the old way of training with unrealistic "dead in the bed" mannequins wasn't as effective.

Because SimMan offers a higher level of realism, studies are finding that the retention level of those participating is much greater, which helps cut down on mistakes.

"The feel of actually starting and IV and watching the rise and fall of respirations created a much more real experience," said Cynthia Preston, a registered nurse at St. Luke's Wood River Medical Center. "It provided much better training than using the old mannequins where everything had to be simulated."

Preston said having simulation opportunities like this are invaluable.

"Being more life-like made it a more difficult exercise just as it would be if working in a real code," she said.

About Air St. Luke's

Air St. Luke's began operations in July 2002 and is now one of the largest medical air transport services in Idaho. Air St. Luke's averages 500 transports a year throughout central and southwest Idaho. More than a third of the transports are trauma calls. Air St. Luke's also provides critical training to first responders throughout its service area. Air St. Luke's is supported through membership fees. An Air St. Luke's membership costs \$60 a year for the first year and \$55 a year thereafter. A lifetime membership is \$100. Membership covers all the costs of medically necessary transport. To find out more visit www.stlukesonline.com.