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ECU shows off new learning lab on wheels

The Mobile Healthcare Simulation Unit can be driven to places where training opportunities are few.

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The Daily Reflector

East Carolina University introduced its latest medical technological wonder

on Wednesday — a learning laboratory on wheels.

The big blue and purple Freightliner truck, with one slideout, is called the Mobile Healthcare Simula-

tion Unit and it can be driven to areas where resources and training opportunities are few and far between.

It looks like a combination of an 18-wheeler and an RV. In the front slideout section is an area that resembles an emergency

room. In the center is a computer room that runs the simulations. The back section is set up like an ambulance bay, with seats along the side where people can watch the trainer treat a mannequin with an

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Dr. Skip Robey, director of the Critical Simulation program, explains the use of a mannequin in high-functioning, emergency circumstances inside of the Mobile Healthcare Simulation Unit on Wednesday.

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array of health problems.

A small boy mannequin was in the ambulance bay on Wednesday for treatment after an "accident." He had makeup that looked like bruises on his body, and on his right leg, there was a rubber cover designed to look like he had an open wound and a broken bone.

The mannequin appeared to be breathing, but in the computer room, with a press of a button, the boy mannequin could stop breathing or his blood pressure could drop.

"We can make him cry. I can make him vomit," said Dave Schiller, the operations manager and simulations manager. "Some of the other ones, we can make them bleed. We can make him stop breathing to the point we have to in-

tubate him."

There are other mannequins as well, including a female mannequin that can simulate giving birth, putting trainees through all kinds of difficult birthing situations such as a breach birth.

"We can simulate anything that would be encountered in an actual clinical setting," Schiller said.

"We want to make it as real as possible," said Dr. Skip Robey, Brody School of Medicine's assistant dean for simulation and safety education and director of the simulation center. "We're trying to mimic reality."

The trainer can show how to treat various conditions, and it's all recorded from cameras that are in the two bays.

The trainees then have an opportunity to treat the "patient," and their work will be digitally recorded. Later, they can watch the recording together and

look at what was done correctly and what was done incorrectly.

The mobile unit is a part of a larger simulation center. Inside the School of Medicine is a 7,500-square-foot center that has 14 simulation rooms.

Now with the mobile unit, they can drive it to a rural EMS station to train EMTs and paramedics.

They also can drive it to smaller hospitals to provide training for their emergency room physicians.

"We can go to the remote areas and do training in those areas or they can come here and do training here," Robey said.

The mobile unit cost about \$500,000 and was paid for with state funds. It was made at Rosenbauer in Sioux Falls, S.D.

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