



News Release

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Joint simulation gives students chance to communicate patient care

KOKOMO, Ind. — The sounds of a beeping monitor and hissing respirator fill the room as nursing students assess their patient to determine what is causing breathing difficulties.

A radiography student then knocks on the door, with doctor's orders in hand to conduct an X-ray.

They adjust the hospital bed, move the patient into the right position, and then slide a metal plate behind her back, apologizing for the cold. They all step out of the room for the radiography student to take the X-ray, and then return to their assessment.

Behind a one-way glass window, Bridget Whitmore, assistant dean of the School of Nursing, stops the students to review their exercise in the St. Joseph Hospital Clinical Simulation Center located at Indiana University Kokomo.

The nursing school uses the simulation center regularly to develop its students' patient care skills, but this week's exercise was the first including radiography students. It included second-year students in both programs.

The simulation gives radiography student Justin Miller a better appreciation for how nurses and medical imaging professionals work together.

"Our professional responsibility is the same, to care for the patient, but in different ways," he said. "Our end goal is always the same. We want what is best for the patient."

Both nurses and medical imaging professionals have a role in patient care, said nursing student Kyle Wyant said, adding that the simulation reminded him of that.

“With a patient who is experiencing difficulty breathing, it’s hard to make a nursing diagnosis without the X-ray,” he said.

Center Director April Mouser said the joint simulation is part of an effort to teach better communication skills for medical professionals, to prevent errors and provide better patient care.

“That’s what it’s all about, our patients,” she said. “The majority of medical errors come from lack of communication. Prevention starts at the undergraduate level, with all of us knowing what our role is, and what role other health providers play. We all need to have an appreciation for what our colleagues do, and not just focus on our own jobs, to give the best care possible to our patients.”

Treating a virtual patient allows students to practice their skills safely, Heidi Sebastian, assistant clinical professor of radiographic sciences, said.

“You learn from your mistakes, and nobody gets hurt,” she said. “We hope to have more opportunities for our students to learn together. As health care workers, we are here to educate each other. We have to be able to work together.”

Nursing student Krista Armstrong gained insight about how other professionals may help her care for her patients in the future.

“Nurses aren’t the only people helping our patients,” she said. “We all need to learn more about each other’s roles, for the best outcome for our patients.”

Indiana University Kokomo serves north central Indiana.

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