

Director's Corner: Defining a New Reality Through Immersive Simulation

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Over the last two years, you have heard the term ‘new normal’ to describe the changing landscape that has emerged out of the COVID-19 pandemic. The term codifies the different and new realities in which we live. In the health care industry, this new reality includes a massive wave of innovation and emerging health technologies. The Simulation Learning, Evaluation, Assessment, and Research Network (SimLEARN) has been a critical resource in using simulation to test, develop, and accelerate those technologies and innovations. One of our key objectives is to ensure clinical staff is prepared and able to deploy emerging technologies and transformational care models. That intention was manifested through the collaboration of government, academic and industry professionals at the [2022 VA Summer Immersive Summit](#).

June 28-30th, the Veterans Health Administration’s (VHA) Office of Healthcare Innovation and Learning (OHIL), hosted a two-and-a-half-day event at SimLEARN’s National Simulation Center (NSC) highlighting how VA’s use of immersive technology is defining a new reality for Veterans, clinicians, facilities, and health care.

Accordingly, the accelerating rate of change in health care requires a shift in the traditional training and simulation model to better suit today’s health care system or clinical providers in VA and beyond. Rather than looking at training or simulation as stand-alone products, the new reality for clinical education and health care requires simulation-based training in a realistic, immersive environment. A critical element

to successfully meeting this new reality will be immersive technology. SimLEARN's five portfolios provide a body of programs and tools that improve Veteran well-being through simulation-based innovation and technologies delivered in a safe learning environment. Each of these portfolios contribute to ensuring VHA clinicians have access to training and simulation resources that reflect current and emerging care models.

The **Assessment, Collaboration, and Outreach (ACO)** portfolio provides proactive simulation experiences for medical facilities which include scenarios for clinical staff activities, assessments and evaluations for medical system and hospital activations, and simulation training programs at local VA medical facilities supporting Veterans who live in rural areas.

The **Clinical Training and Engagement (CTE)** portfolio leverages its clinical simulation expertise to educate and collaborate with VA medical centers to deliver critical skills to staff and ultimately enhance Veteran outcomes. CTE reimagines learning by delivering simulation-based training through innovative, virtual distribution channels.

The **Learning Management (LM)** portfolio facilitates simulation-based development, curricula, distribution, and tools that support innovative, enterprise-level health care solutions. LM reimagined learning in 2021 by leveraging virtual platforms to distribute just-in-time clinical-based simulation training.

The **Resuscitation Education and Innovation (REdI)** portfolio, which is the national VHA resuscitation program, uses innovative tools and transformative processes to enhance medical emergency responses.

And the **Emerging Healthcare Technology Integration (EHTI)** portfolio focuses on the integration of emerging health technology into clinical care through identifying solutions that advance the standard of clinical learning and simulation and optimizing workflows of emerging health technologies in a simulated, risk-free environment.

All five of SimLEARN's portfolios facilitate simulation-based education in immersive environments, allowing learners to engage in realistic, simulated environments to help with learning, unlearning, or relearning. Immersive technologies empower SimLEARN to provide unique training platforms that allow clinical training anytime, anywhere using realistic simulations in a safe and evolving environment.

We witnessed changes in the hearts and minds of some attendees at the 2022 VA Summer Immersive Summit. A member of VA leadership stated, "I have gone from sceptic, or perhaps even cynic for VR+AR+MR=XR to evangelist in a very short period of time. This is one of the best events I have ever attended since I joined the VA." Another leader shared, "every single presentation, demonstration, interaction and networking opportunity was awe inspiring, powerful and highly impactful. This summit was a tour de force..."

Moving forward, SimLEARN will continue reimagining learning and transforming simulation to enhance Veteran health and wellness through activating new clinical spaces, adding new SimLEARN Innovation Center for Education (SLICE) centers across the country, and enhancing the VHA simulation network.

Additionally, we will continue development of SimLEARN's Simulation, Validation, Evaluation and Testing (SimVET), which allows VA to test drive health care solutions before they reach Veterans. SimVET will offer a Consumer Reports-style analysis of software, equipment, and medical devices including pros and cons, relevant comparisons, unique advantages, patient safety risks, and end user recommendations.

Following the success of the 2022 VA Summer Immersive Summit, we are excited to host the [SLICE & Simulation Showcase 2022](#) at the NSC between August 30-September 1. The showcase presents an opportunity for VHA enterprise simulation educators, specialists, and experts to collaborate and share strong practices related to simulation initiatives and learn about the SLICE network. So, join us as we bring teams together from across the nation to collaborate and share information about educational practices and innovation.