

## Director's Corner: A New Chapter for SimLEARN

By Eric Bruns, MBA | SimLEARN Executive Director

One of the most exciting parts of reading a good book is the moment you advance to a thrilling new chapter. The Simulation Learning, Evaluation, Assessment, and Research Network (SimLEARN) has seen phenomenal growth in this past year and is now thrilled to turn the page to our next chapter. I am proud to announce a huge piece of SimLEARN's evolution: the rebranding of the VHA National Simulation Center to the **National Simulation Validation, Evaluation, and Testing (SimVET) Center**. The new name reflects a more accurate description of the purpose of the center, which encompasses more than just simulation.



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Moving into this new fiscal year, SimLEARN will focus on several key initiatives and objectives. We will continue piloting and running SimVET, an emerging innovative model and service that test drives health care solutions (e.g., clinical software applications and medical devices) in a realistic simulated clinical environment where failures can be corrected and mitigated prior to acquisition and deployment across the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and in VA Medical Centers. The service will produce a Consumer Reports-style analysis of health care solutions, including pros and cons, relevant comparisons, unique

advantages, potential safety risks and end-user recommendations. SimVET aligns directly with Under Secretary of Health Dr. Shereef Elnahal's priorities for the VHA, and we are excited to make an impact with this service by continuing to propel VHA toward becoming a high-reliability organization (HRO).

SimLEARN will also pilot digital twinning for VHA facility construction. The digital twin simulation system is used to support the planning, construction and assessment of designs and workflows for existing and new health care facility spaces. The system provides a comprehensive picture of real-time, historic and future scenarios, while presenting data that is user-friendly in 3D visual environments. In collaboration with the Office of Construction and Facilities Management, we expect our digital twinning service to reduce instances of blueprint changes and rework during construction, while eliminating safety hazards for patients. With this service, SimLEARN can now work with the clinicians who will use the facilities and spaces to include their needs, requirements and dimensions before moving the first shovel of dirt. This will be a game changer that illustrates how simulation can transform VHA's delivery of services for VA staff members and facilities to enhance Veteran health and wellness for years to come.

Lastly, we will collaborate with other Office of Healthcare Innovation and Learning (OHIL) portfolios to produce Veteran-facing simulations and use simulation to expand extended reality (XR) throughout VHA. **On December 15, from 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**, OHIL will host the first-ever Veteran eXpeRience (VXR) at the National SimVET Center in Orlando, Florida. Guided by VA staff, who are leaders in XR and immersive technology, Veterans will have the opportunity to use virtual reality (VR) headsets in a wide variety of immersive experiences. Participants will leave having discovered that XR is more than gaming; it's about transforming how Veterans receive and experience care.

SimLEARN also looks forward to hosting and participating in several additional events, which include the VHA Resuscitation Symposium between February 14 – 16, 2023, the SimDesign Collaborative Conference between February 28 and March 2, 2023, the return of the VA Immersive Summit in summer 2023 and more.

SimLEARN was proud to have a presence at the 2022 VHA Innovation Experience (iEX) Conference where our staff shared how simulation plays a critical role in innovative Veteran care. We are looking forward to iEX being in our backyard in 2023, as the conference comes to Orlando, Florida.

I applaud all of the accomplishments that SimLEARN portfolios and staff members are achieving as we continue working to transform simulation in order to enhance Veteran care and wellness during the next fiscal year and beyond.