Revolutionizing Veteran Care: VHA's National SimVET Center Embarks on Holoportation Technology

By Jerikka Freeman AIP, Brian Stevenson PMP, COR, Michael Doczekalski EMT, Eric Bruns, Executive Director | SimLEARN

The SimDesign Collaborative Conference commenced with a holographic introduction by SimLEARN's Executive Director Eric Bruns. (VA Courtesy Photo)

The Simulation Learning, Evaluation, Assessment, and Research Network (SimLEARN) introduced a remarkable new technology to the simulation community during its three-day SimDesign Collaborative Conference: holoportation. With the support of the University of Central Florida (UCF) and industry partner Dr. Hologram, SimLEARN presented a captivating holoportation experience that was met with immense intrigue and excitement.

Holoportation is a technology that enables people to appear as holograms in real-time in different locations. It uses a combination of cameras and sensors to capture a person's image and transmits it to another location where it is depicted as a 3D hologram. Holoportation can be used to provide remote care to patients who are unable to travel to a hospital or clinic. It can also be used for medical education and training.

The immersive and interactive content presented at the conference utilized UCF's holographic audio-visual system, which is capable of beaming holographic displays in real time. This was the first official revealing of Proto's EPIC Holoportation device on a Veterans Health Administration (VHA) premise.

According to the company's website, Proto Inc. is the world's first and only holographic communications platform with its own hardware, software and app ecosystem.

"It was inspiring to collaborate with such an innovative academic affiliate," stated Brian Dery, SimLEARN's Technical Director of Support Operations. "I'm looking forward to the technology's integration into SimLEARN and impact on Veteran care," he concluded.

The conference commenced with a holographic introduction by SimLEARN's Executive Director Eric Bruns. Although he was unable to be present in-person, his holographic presence allowed for a profoundly engaging and personal encounter. The recording process was noted as being straightforward and requiring minimal equipment. The feedback received about the device's audio-visual quality and depth were nothing short of exceptional. Director Bruns anticipates installation of the equipment at SimLEARN within the coming year as he feels it is certain to enhance production capabilities.

There is more to come in 2023 as SimLEARN's Simulation Validation, Evaluation, and Testing (SimVET) Portfolio, led by Medical Director Dr. Scott Wiltz, plans to further explore the use of holographic technology in Veteran health care. This holoportation effort is led by the SimVET Integrations Program and Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Dr. Laura Kim.

Simulation enthusiasts and education experts have already begun formulating how holoportation technology can be implemented as the new frontier in health care education. "I can see a lot of opportunity," expressed Patient Experience Analyst Charles Tubbs. "I see it engaging various audiences for different use cases, from patients to employees."

Ultimately, the introduction of holoportation garnered high interest within the simulation community. It has the potential to transform the way Veterans receive and experience care.