

Disaster training soars to new heights at the Tampa Bay AirFest with the Sim Bus

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(#1 left side - pictured - Travis Garrett, Disaster Emergency Manager, Dr. Janet Sprehe, Program Director James A. Haley VA Hospital Advanced Simulation Center, Dr. Betty Holte, Clinical Nurse Educator and Melissa Baler RN

#2 right side – pictured - Dr. Betty Holte training young students who are pursuing careers in the military. Photographs provided by Janet Sprehe)

The James A. Haley VA Hospital took disaster training to new levels by supporting the [Tampa Bay Air Show 2022](#) on MacDill Air Force Base this year. Simulation resources were front and center with the hospital's mobile simulation bus, known as the Sim Bus, and VA staff who trained more than 500 people at the Stop the Bleed event.

Stop the Bleed is a national training that guides learners on how to respond in an emergency where someone has had an accident that might cause them to bleed to death. A life-threatening bleeding injury can happen anywhere to those involved in disasters or serious accidents. Someone trained to recognize severe bleeding and act effectively to control the injury could provide interventions to save a life.

People of all ages were excited to learn the procedure which was initiated by the American College of Surgeons and the Hartford Consensus. The Hartford Consensus recommends that all citizens learn to stop bleeding whether it be from an active shooter or a mass casualty. The only thing more tragic than a death from bleeding is a death that could have been prevented. At the Tampa Bay Air Show 2022, Betty Holte, Janet Sprehe, and Lisa Baker, staff nurses from the James A. Haley VA Hospital, trained the public on three bleeding control actions designed to prevent death from a major bleeding event.

Some of the benefits of having the Sim Bus at the Tampa Bay Air Show was it informed the community of the bus's dual-use vehicle capabilities. As people entered the mobile simulation bus, they learned the bus was able to do medical transport with either 17 litters or stretchers. The Sim Bus can also comfortably seat 64 patients. A lift provides portable computed tomography (CT) scans or X-ray capabilities to enter the bus. Surgery can also be performed on the bus with its high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters to provide a sterile environment.

James A. Haley VA Hospital Disaster Emergency Manager, Travis Garrett, collaborated with the MacDill Air Force Base for the event and facilitated using the mobile simulation bus for trainings. The collaboration for the disaster training continues to support [VA's 4th mission](#). One person who participated in the training said, "wow, what a great training we got today that may be useful in the future." Another learner stated, "this bus is so cool. I feel more at ease knowing we have a bus like this here in our town!" "This training is so beneficial in the world today," an additional participant revealed.

The Sim Bus and the Stop the Bleed community trainings are ongoing resources the James A. Haley VA Advanced Simulation Center, a [SimLEARN Certified Simulation Center](#), takes to local universities and schools. Over the last three years, VA staff trained more than 4,000 people with the program.