

## **New RHIC Simulation Center Better Prepares Health Care Students and Providers**

Partners of the Rural Health Innovation Collaborative (RHIC) are developing a Simulation Center for the interprofessional education of health care professions students and providers.

Leaders from Union Hospital, Ivy Tech Community College-Wabash Valley and Indiana State University are creating a learning environment in which students from their campuses learn to work together to care for patients using real-life scenarios and life-like electronic "patients" that mimic actual human conditions. Medical students from Indiana University School of Medicine, local secondary school students, and hospital staff also will have access to the center.

The Simulation Center will enable the partners to consolidate resources, including programmable electronic mannequins, from each institution. This center will be housed in the former intensive care unit in Union Hospital's West Building. Students will begin training in the center in mid-January.

"As a former patient care area, it's ready made to recreate scenarios for students and others to learn," said Julie Will, Dean, School of Health Sciences, Ivy Tech Community College.

Simulation allows students to learn the art and science of patient interaction, decision making and clinical care skills using scenarios that occur in the real world. Simulations can use human actors who present themselves to students or health care providers with health issues or symptoms, electronic devices representing specific parts of the anatomy such as the colon, or sophisticated full-sized mannequins of the male and female adult, a child or infant. The mannequins can be programmed to take on a number of symptoms, conditions and complications and respond to interventions that students perform.

When the RHIC Simulation Center opens, it will be home to an adult male mannequin named Stan, an adult female mannequin named Noelle who is also capable of simulating giving birth, and a baby named Hal. Additional purchases of simulation equipment are planned for early 2011. Technology to link this equipment is being made possible by a \$100,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). This grant was awarded to Union Hospital's Richard G. Lugar Center for Rural Health on behalf of the RHIC.

"In addition to providing a safe environment for students to learn, the center provides a place for students from various disciplines who will one day work together in the healthcare workplace to work together in the learning environment," said Biff Williams, dean of Indiana State's College of Nursing, Health, and Human Services. "Typically, for example, nursing students don't learn along side respiratory therapy students. The Simulation Center will let them learn in teams just as they will work in teams."