BCCC receives Golden LEAF grant

Money funds patient simulators

Beaufort County Community College has received a $200,000 grant from the Golden LEAF Foundation to buy patient simulators for a new clinical nursing lab that will improve training for nearly 300 nursing students over the next three years, college and grant officials announced in March.

Human patient simulators are technologically sophisticated mannequins that provide computer-driven responses to various health care procedures performed by nursing students.

The students are then able to translate classroom theory into action based on the mannequin’s response to their actions and, therefore, develop critical thinking skills in a controlled environment without jeopardizing patient safety, according to college officials.

North Carolina nursing educators have begun to expect simulation training in nursing schools statewide to help student obtain the hours needed for clinical experiences in a timely and safe manner.

“The Golden LEAF Foundation is committed to supporting the quality of rural health care, as it is a vital part of the infrastructure necessary for rural communities to attract companies and citizens,” said Dan Gerlach, Golden LEAF President. “This grant will provide the equipment necessary to help grow the talent, knowledge and skill of health professionals in Beaufort County.”

The equipment purchased for the BCCC nursing simulation lab with the grant money will include two patient simulators - each with a computer hook-up and simulated patient monitor with software, drug recognition kit and accessories.

The equipment will also include a VitalSim task trainer, stretchers, poles and pumps for intravenous fluids, monitors and defibrillation trays.

The new simulators will be part of a new clinical nursing laboratory at the college that will improve the hands-on practice its nursing students receive and, therefore, improve their nursing skills as they enter the job market in eastern North Carolina, according to Laura Billey, director of BCCC’s nursing programs.

“Beaufort County Community College is fortunate to receive this grant,” Billey said. “Simulation has become the educational standard to enable students to learn advanced patient-care skills in a safe environment.

“With patient simulators, the students can practice different scenarios and the instructor can program the patient response based on student actions,” she said. “The students can then gain immediate feedback on their actions, which helps reinforce the principles that are essential in acute patient care.”

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