New robot patients are highlight of GHC lab

The Nursing Simulation Lab at Heritage Hall was recently completed.

By Daniel Bell
Staff Writer
DBell@RN-T.com

The patient, who moments before had a steady pulse and normal breathing, suddenly crashed. No heartbeat. No breathing.

As a panicked wife pleaded for help, several well-dressed professionals in business attire jumped into action at the bedside, beginning chest compressions. No luck. Another person brought in a defibrillator, attached the device to the patient and pressed the appropriate button.

In another room, watching the action, the interim director of the Georgia Highlands College nursing department clicked the mouse on a laptop computer as a couple of times.

Success. The patient’s pulse returned, his breathing resumed, and the dozens of onlookers cheered.

The patient was a robot, and the life-saving professionals were attending a dedication ceremony Tuesday for GHC’s new Nursing Simulation Lab, an $80,000 teaching tool recently completed on the second floor of Heritage Hall in Rome. The project, which features two of the MediMan training simulators, was funded through the college’s Legacy Fund and with help from several medical partners who could potentially benefit from the nursing students who will learn in the lab.

“This lab would not be possible without our partners from the medical community,” said GHC Medical Center, Tanner Medical Center, The Specialty Hospital and WellStar.

The highlight of the lab — and the bulk of the costs — are the two Human Patient Simulators, which are more suitable for training than real patients, said Rebecca Maddox, the interim program director who controlled the simulators during the dedication ceremony.

“This can be used to augment the clinical process, as well as give students experience with diseases they might not see during their time in the hospital,” said Maddox.

Because the robots are totally programmable, Maddox and her staff can put their students through all sorts of scenarios without any risk to an actual flesh and blood person. Also, the mock hospital rooms are wired for video so teachers and students can sit down and review their responses and discuss what went right and what could have been done better.

“We can say, ‘Well, you saw this happen, what do you think would happen if we tried this intervention instead?’” said Maddox.

During the ceremony, Pierce unveiled a sign outside the lab naming the six partners: Floyd Medical Center, Harbin Clinic, Redmond Regional Medi-