

A special delivery at OSF Saint Anthony's Health Center: OB nurses receive high-tech training

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ALTON - A robotic bundle of joy is keeping OSF HealthCare delivery nurses on their toes.

Baby HAL is a neo-natal simulator that serves as a training tool for obstetric doctors and nurses. The robotic baby is part of OSF HealthCare's simulation training program.

“There has been very positive feedback from participants training with HAL. The experience is learner-focused, and allows the participants to identify their own areas for growth,” said Elaine Shafer, OSF HealthCare Perinatal Network Administrator.

HAL – which stands for “Hardware Artificial Life” – is a trademark name of Gaumard Scientific Simulators. It recently made the rounds at OSF Saint Anthony’s Health Center in Alton.

The life-like newborn robot appears to breathe, and can be programmed to change colors from a healthy pink to dangerous blue. It can also simulate life threatening complications, allowing nurses to encounter and treat complicated medical emergencies with absolutely no risk to the patient. Thanks to the high-tech tike, doctors and nurses can prepare for any imaginable complication.

“Drills are done at least quarterly to simulate actual obstetrical emergencies. Nurses practice for real emergencies and with the robotics the situation is made even more real-to-life,” said Julie Ashlock, Manager of Labor and Delivery Services at OSF Saint Anthony’s Women’s Pavilion. “Simulation training is a great benefit to nurses, giving them the best possible training short of the actual emergency. OB is the ER for obstetrical patients. You have to be prepared for any emergency that presents itself.”

The OSF HealthCare simulation training program aims to improve patient care and safety, and reduce costs through education. Baby HAL has helped in the training of about 500 doctors and nurses, as well as medical and nursing students.

This training underscores OSF Saint Anthony’s commitment to patient care by providing continuing education for its Mission Partners. For more information on OSF Saint Anthony’s Women’s Pavilion – including its maternity and birthing services – please call (618) 465-4528.