



South Texas Veterans Health Care System Hosts Inaugural Point of Care Ultrasonography Course

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Dr. Michelle Brooks (left) and Dr. Luyang Jin (right) use ultrasound guidance for central line insertion. VA courtesy photo.

The South Texas Veterans Health Care System (STVHCS) Simulation Center took a significant step forward in health care education by hosting its inaugural Point of Care Ultrasonography Course (POCUS) in September. Faculty members from across the United States, including experts from Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Madison, and Los Angeles, gathered to collaborate during this innovative event. Led by Dr. Nilam Soni, Director of the VA Point-of-Care Ultrasound Patient Safety Center, and Dr. Robert Nathanson, Director of the POCUS/Anger and Irritability Management Skills (AIMS) Track, the course's primary focus was to empower health care providers with the capabilities to perform core ultrasound applications, thereby enhancing patient safety, diagnostic skills, and decision-making based on solid evidence.

POCUS is a gold standard for numerous medical procedures, such as central line placements, reducing morbidity, mortality, and health care costs. The course's objective was to not only augment medical imaging knowledge but also improve participants' diagnostic skills through realistic scenarios and interactive simulations. The course, available both in-person and virtually, spanned 2.5 days, providing hands-on practice for critical procedural skills like thoracentesis, vascular access, and paracentesis, along with comprehensive ultrasonography of the abdomen, lungs, lower extremities, and heart. Prior to the event, participants were required to complete pre-work modules.

Debra Bartoshevich, the simulation program director at STVHCS, highlighted the importance of thorough preparation in ensuring a successful course. This preparation involved numerous logistical considerations, from the utilization of standardized patients and the acquisition of specialized ultrasound equipment to organizing dedicated spaces, recording equipment, student resources, and the coordination of remote teaching faculty. The valuable experience of Dr. Soni, acquired through teaching at the National SimVET Center in Orlando, Florida, contributed significantly to the smooth transition of the course to San Antonio. Kathryn Krellenstein, the POCUS Program Coordinator at UT Health San Antonio, also played a pivotal role in course planning.

Feedback from learners underscored their increased knowledge and confidence in employing ultrasound technology. Given the resounding success of this course, the STVHCS Simulation Center intends to offer the POCUS course on an annual basis.



Dr. Terry Lund using ultrasound to examine abdomen during inaugural Point of Care Ultrasonography Course.