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## Press Release

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# Northern Maine's first Allied Health Simulation Center opens on NMCC campus

**Aroostook County** - A first-of-its kind simulation center for nursing and allied health students and medical professionals in the northern part of the state opened its doors today on the Northern Maine Community College campus in Presque Isle.

Complete with a demonstration of a new patient simulator conducted by NMCC nursing and allied health faculty and an official ribbon cutting of the new Allied Health Simulation Center on the second floor of the Edmunds Building, County healthcare leaders and community members joined with Northern Maine Community College and Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Maine officials to officially open the new facility.

“This is truly an historic day for nursing education in northern Maine and a significant milestone in the five decade history of our nursing program,” said NMCC President Timothy Crowley. “The Allied Health Simulation Center will serve not only our nursing, emergency medical services and medical assisting students, but will also be made available to other healthcare providers who wish to practice or learn new techniques. Our goal is to enhance the educational opportunities of health care providers in Aroostook County, and with this new center we are taking a huge leap forward in that effort.”

It is that overarching goal and the future potential of the center to positively impact the level and quality of healthcare delivered in the County that prompted the Anthem Foundation to support the project last fall through a directed contribution to the *Campaign for the County's College*, NMCC's first-ever major gifts fundraising initiative. Dan Corcoran, president of Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Maine was present at the opening ceremony.

“This facility uses 21<sup>st</sup> century technology to provide the kind of hands-on educational experience that today’s students hunger for. To be able to simulate realistic medical emergencies on computerized mannequins so students can see firsthand how their care is impacting the ‘patient’ for better or worse – this is training after all – that kind of educational experience is invaluable,” said Corcoran. “We at Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield are confident that this facility will truly improve the quality of health care training and the quality of health care delivered in northern Maine. We are very pleased to join with Northern Maine Community College and with the greater health care community in Aroostook County in celebrating the opening of this important learning center.”

The allied health simulation center at NMCC houses both an adult patient simulator, as well as a pediatric model, which will provide students and other users simulation-based education to enhance clinical and decision making skills during realistic patient care scenarios. The Medical Educational Technologies Inc. (METI) simulators are accompanied by the METI Vision System, which allows for secure web-based access to live broadcasts or on-demand style access to recorded sessions for those that will be involved with the simulator usage.

The Anthem Foundation grant provided for the purchase and installation of simulation and other needed equipment for implementation. NMCC refurbished and transformed an existing space in the Continuing Education Division area in the Edmunds building to house the technology and instructional space.

The College enrolls an average of 150 students annually in nursing and allied health related programs, which include emergency medical services and medical assisting. College officials estimate that in addition to these users of the facility, another 200 to 300 health care professionals working throughout the region in hospitals, long-term care facilities, medical offices and on emergency responder teams will take advantage of the technology.

“Use of this simulator will allow nursing and allied health students to experience many client situations which might not present themselves in the clinical settings at the times when they are there. It will also provide a safe way for students to employ critical thinking skills and problem-solve without risk, and it will give faculty opportunities to use ‘teachable moments’ for groups of students with one scenario as opposed to working only with one student at a time,” said Betty Kent-Conant, chair of NMCC’s nursing and allied health department. “We believe that we will be far stronger in facilitating students’ learning with this advanced technological tool to assist us. We are greatly appreciative of all the parties who have assisted in making this possible for the college, the programs served, and the many students who will benefit.”

The department chair and veteran faculty member with nearly three decades of experience in nursing education has been working over the past year with her nursing and allied health faculty members to plan for the actual implementation of the simulation center and the related technology.

“This simulation center opens up many new possibilities and learning opportunities for both NMCC students, as well as for community healthcare providers,” said Daryl Boucher, nursing instructor and coordinator of NMCC’s emergency medical services program. “This is a safe way to learn difficult technical skills and to get immediate feedback. I am amazed at how a student’s confidence improves by using simulation technology. There is a tremendous amount of research that demonstrates the effectiveness of this type of learning.”

Faculty in the nursing and allied health programs intend to use the allied health simulation center as the primary arena for student hands-on learning in the related programs prior to, and in conjunction with, clinical experiences in hospitals, other healthcare facilities, and in emergency settings.

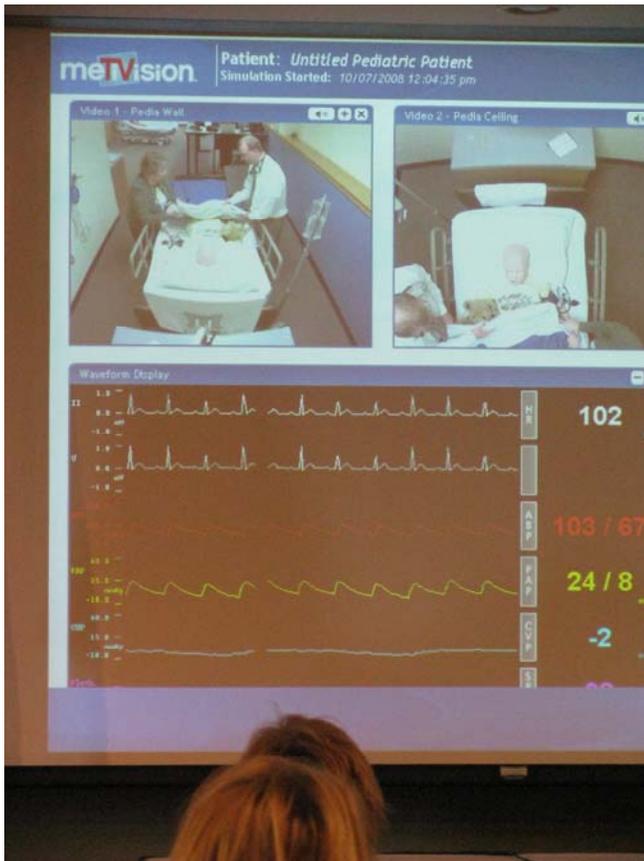
NMCC has been the largest provider of nurses in Aroostook County for more than 40 years. In addition to the Presque Isle campus, the associate degree in nursing program is currently offered at two distant sites in Houlton and Calais.

The Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation seeks to support “Healthy Minds, Healthy Bodies, Healthy Communities” through partnerships with nonprofit organizations, programs and projects that decrease the number of uninsured, improve access to care, reduce healthcare disparities, promote healthy lifestyles, advance health-related public policy and establish best practices in medicine and/or business management.

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*Local health care, business and community leaders joined officials from Northern Maine Community College, and Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in celebrating the official opening of the new Allied Health Simulation Center on the NMCC campus, the first of its kind in northern Maine. Cutting the ribbon are, from left: Dan Corcoran, president of Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Maine; Timothy Crowley, president of Northern Maine Community College; Richard Engels, chair of the NMCC Foundation; and Betty Kent-Conant, chair of the NMCC nursing and allied health department.*



*During the grand opening celebration of the Allied Health Simulation Center, audience members in the Edmunds Conference Center viewed a live demonstration via the meTiVision system of NMCC nursing instructors Eileen McDougal and Daryl Boucher performing a series of functions on the pediatric simulator patient in the center. After the presentation, nursing students led guided tours to the center.*



*Groups toured the new Allied Health Simulation Center at Northern Maine Community College during the grand opening of the facility on October 7. Daryl Boucher (far right), NMCC nursing instructor and emergency medical services coordinator, explains the workings of the human patient simulator to, from left: NMCC President Tim Crowley, Representative Patricia Sutherland, NMCC Foundation Chair Richard Engels, and Dan Corcoran, president of Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Maine.*



*Daryl Boucher (far right), NMCC nursing instructor and emergency medical services coordinator, explains the workings of the human patient simulator to, from left: Tom Moakler, CEO of Houlton Regional Hospital; Martin Bernstein, CEO of Northern Maine Medical Center; Phil Bosse from Senator Susan Collins' office; and Karl Jackson, NMCC business and industry coordinator.*



*NMCC nursing instructor Eileen McDougal (center) demonstrates the pediatric human patient simulator to, from left: Sharon Campbell from Senator Snowe's office; Dan Corcoran, president of Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Maine; Barbara Hazlett from Congressman Michaud's office; and Phil Bosse from Senator Collins' office.*