Implementation of a High-Fidelity Simulation Day for Student Registered Nurse Anesthetists: Program Development and Evaluation Project

**Background/Introduction**

In order to become a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA), critical care nurses must meet the high standards required to be considered for acceptance into anesthesia school. Once accepted, Student Registered Nurse Anesthetists (SRNAs) must successfully complete a demanding didactic and clinical curriculum. SRNAs must develop a new set of clinical skills which include airway management, mask ventilation, insertion of invasive lines, and management of emergent decline in patient condition. The expectation is that SRNAs are adequately prepared and have a foundation of these skills prior to entry into a clinical setting.

Due to the complex nature of anesthesia education, SRNAs are at risk for high levels of stress.  Stress can lead to poor performance and slow clinical judgement (Chipas & McKenna, 2011).  Unfortunately, unnecessary stress can be problematic in the clinical setting, because SRNAs are expected to care for patients in a high acuity setting, often making critical decisions that may negatively impact patient outcomes.

Simulation-based education provides a safe place for SRNAs to practice clinical skills before entering the clinical arena.  In a controlled environment, students are exposed to real world situations and use clinical judgement to confidently manage care. One of the primary benefits of patient simulation is the ability to practice critical thinking and decision making as well as technical skills without fear of causing harm to patients (Lambert, 2015). The need to train skilled medical professionals with the continual goal of safe patient care has fueled the development of high fidelity simulation as a valuable educational technique in nursing education (Schiavenato, 2009). Through simulated experiences, students are allotted time to gain awareness of personal strengths, limitations, and areas for improvement; and instructors can provide important lessons that may lead to improved performance.

Throughout SRNA clinical practicum experiences, students rotate to many clinical settings, each with unique operating room layouts, anesthesia cart organization, anesthesia machines, and protocols. Orientation to each new setting can be time intensive, but lack of familiarity with the setting can interfere with learning, and take away from the clinical experience. This project involves the development and implementation of a simulation boot-camp exclusively developed to better prepare SRNAs to care for patients at a level 1 trauma center centrally located in Illinois. The simulation will occur in a high-fidelity simulation center within the facility identified. This site serves as a clinical affiliate to the university based nurse anesthesia program that rotates eight students through the facility each year.