Pioneering Surgical ‘Boot Camp’ Offers Unique Hands-on Training for Residents

Simulation training helps cardiothoracic surgery residents prepare for the OR

CHICAGO – Forty cardiothoracic surgery residents will gather in Chapel Hill, NC, September 17-20 to practice using the latest technology for heart and lung procedures, including cardiopulmonary bypass, vessel anastomosis, lobectomy, aortic valve surgery, aortic root surgery, and mitral valve surgery.

“Simulation-based education allows surgeons to hone their skills and techniques in a safe environment, prior to actually operating on patients in a clinical setting,” explained Richard H. Feins, MD, from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and Co-Director of the Thoracic Surgery Directors Association Boot Camp. “Since its inception in 2008, our program has been instrumental in developing the training techniques to produce highly skilled surgeons.”

The TSDA Boot Camp offers residents a unique hands-on training experience, as well as the ability to manage rare, catastrophic events in a simulated environment so that they are better prepared when facing these situations in the operating room.

“By bringing simulation-based training to the forefront of surgical education, the TSDA Boot Camp is a catalyst for producing better surgeons,” said Dr. Feins.

The TSDA Boot Camp was the first national simulation-based resident training program and has served as a model for other surgical specialties. Each year the program curriculum changes to focus on the most current situations facing CT surgeons. In the past, the course included 32 cardiothoracic surgery residents, but was expanded in 2014 to accommodate 40 residents.

"New cardiothoracic surgery residents gain an intense experience in the specialty, under the watchful eyes of top surgeons from across the country," said Jonathan C. Nesbitt, MD, a Boot Camp program director from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn. "This experience leaves a lasting impression and provides the residents with the ability to learn in a controlled, low-stress environment. Such an experience cannot be matched."

As Boot Camp faculty monitor residents at every skills station and provide formative feedback following each exercise, resident assessment tools provide valuable data for faculty.

“New technology is constantly being introduced into the operating room, changing the way we care for our patients,” said George L. Hicks Jr., MD, a program director from the University of...
Rochester in New York. “Holding our Boot Camp training program annually ensures that we are staying at the forefront of our specialty and training cardiothoracic surgery residents using the latest techniques and equipment available, enabling them to provide the highest quality patient care.”

The Boot Camp training also employs crisis management with different operating room scenarios; some of which are rare events that the trainee may not experience during their residency training.

Other Boot Camp Co-Directors include James I. Fann, MD, from Stanford University in California, and Nahush A. Mokadam, MD, from the University of Washington in Seattle. A total of 40 faculty will be in attendance to teach, guide and mentor residents throughout the weekend.

This year’s program will be held at The William and Ida Friday Center for Continuing Education in Chapel Hill, NC.

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For more information on the TSDA Boot Camp or other TSDA activities, contact Beth Winer, Executive Director, at bwiner@tsda.org or 312-202-5855.

**About the Thoracic Surgery Directors Association**
The Thoracic Surgery Directors Association (TSDA) was established in 1978 as a membership organization for cardiothoracic surgery residency program directors. TSDA provides resources and networking opportunities for program directors and program coordinators, and supplemental curriculum materials and resources for general surgery and cardiothoracic surgery residents.