

Reservists complete 2-week training regimen at Keesler Medical Center

1 of 4 groups scheduled to visit during summer

A group of Air Force Reserve medics from Florida completed two weeks of training at Keesler Medical Center July 25.

The team from the 920th Aeromedical Staging Squadron at Patrick AFB, spent two days in the 81st Medical Support Squadron's Clinical Research Laboratory practicing suturing techniques. The objective was to train non-physician health-care providers on selecting and using instruments and supplies for suturing skin and subcutaneous tissue. It also provided hands-on suture techniques training to augment their medical readiness skills that may be used in peacetime trauma or wartime missions. They also were trained on advanced emergency medical procedures.

Staff Sgt. Tracie Lawrence, 81st Medical Group Education and Training Flight, conducted the reservists' readiness skill verification training using the flight's METI (skills simulation) lab.

According to Tech. Sgt. Anthony Williams, the flight's annual reserve coordinator, members of the 920th ASTS worked with 81st MDG staff throughout their stay. Master Sgt. Donald Smith, a lab technician, accompanied the Keesler Blood Donor Center staff on a blood drive to Pensacola. Medical administration personnel Master Sgt. David Sanford, Staff Sgts. Ida Marrero,



'A stitch in time'

Reserve medical technicians Staff Sgt. Noel Sosa, left foreground, Master Sgt. Manuel Beck, left rear, and Staff Sgt. Sarah Hernandez practice suturing techniques on pig's feet in the CRL. The lab staff purchased them at the commissary.

Joseph McCabe, Nicole Blankenship and Dung Nguyen and Senior Airman Christina Mangold rotated through Systems, TRICARE, RMO, Medical Records and Readiness. Tech..Sgt. Jacques Gilles, a mental health technician, worked in mental health and ADAPT. Senior Airman Bill Turner, a medical equipment repair technician, was in Bio-Medical Equipment Repair and Staff Sgt. Edwin Rivera, a dietary technician, rotated through the dining facility.

In addition, Majors Marcia Forbes and Julie Steele, both nurses, saw service in the ER and ICU.

Sergeant Williams noted the two-week sessions are held May-August to prepare the reservists for both in-garrison and theater – peacetime and wartime – missions. In addition to the Florida unit, the medical center is training groups of 15-20 reservists each from California, Oklahoma and Keesler's 403rd Wing.



Improved operations

Col. (Dr.) Bartlett Hayes, left, 81st Surgical Operations Squadron commander, and Col. (Dr.) James Gasque, 81st Medical Group chief of medical staff, listen intently July 23 as Mr. Mattijs Uijterschout, vice president for operations for Shipcom Wireless, explains how the firm's radio frequency identification and real time location systems work. Mr. Uijterschout, is the principal investigator for the pilot project to install RFID systems to improve clinical operations at Keesler Medical Center.

RFID in medical center's future

Shipcom Wireless, Inc., a leading global provider of enterprise and health-care solutions with headquarters in Houston, has been selected by the Air Force Surgeon General's Office to review the current uses of radio frequency identification (RFID) technology across the Air Force Medical Service and then pilot RFID systems to improve clinical operations at Keesler Medical Center.

Representatives were here July 23 to demonstrate the technology which could be installed in the facility in the future.

The project will involve a baseline assessment of the existing implementations of RFID at Air Force medical centers, using Shipcom's HOCAMTM (Hospital Operational & Clinical Assessment Model). This assessment will be followed by recommendations on how the Air Force can most effectively utilize RFID and related technologies to improve patient care and make clinical processes more efficient.

According to Maj. Sam Silverthorne, commander of the 81st Medical Support Squadron Medical Information Management Flight, "There are a number of opportunities for process enhancement in our medical facility, using RFID and other automated identification and data capture technologies. Adoption of these technologies can help enable efficient inventory controls, maintain and track critical assets, track real-time locations of patients and doctors and reduce health care-related errors, etc."