

UTHSC and PioneerRx Partner to Train the Next Generation of Pharmacists

In May 2018, the University of Tennessee Health Science Center opened a new chapter in health care education with its new \$39.7 million Center for Healthcare Improvement and Patient Simulation (CHIPS). The 45,000-square-foot building is dedicated to improving the quality of health care delivery through education and enhanced clinical skills training using standardized patients (actors trained to portray patients), high-fidelity patient simulators (manikins), and virtual reality settings. The building is the only one of its kind in Tennessee and one of only a handful in the country.



The simulation program supports and facilitates the integration and expansion of clinical simulation into professional degree programs and residency training programs across colleges at UTHSC.

For the College of Pharmacy, the new building includes a simulated community pharmacy setting. To facilitate the advanced pharmacy simulation training, UTHSC and PioneerRx are partnering in CHIPS to give students hands-on experience filling prescriptions, assessing appropriateness and safety of medication, understanding medication adherence through medication synchronization, collecting medication history, providing medication education, and focusing on clinical services such as medication therapy management.

[PioneerRx](#), a software company based in Shreveport, Louisiana, focuses on rapid innovation and ensuring community pharmacies have the right tools to carry out the most advanced pharmacy practices. This makes the company an ideal partner to provide educational simulation software in CHIPS.

The company is investing in future generations of pharmacists and technicians through its educational endeavor: PioneerRx University. PioneerRx believes in providing education to each clerk, technician, and pharmacist to make sure they are using its software to its highest potential.

Chris Bankson, university liaison for PioneerRx, understands the impact of excellent training. Before he joined the education department, he was previously a software installer and a pharmacy technician. This, he says, gave him a broad view of the challenges students face when they graduate with little application of their curriculum.

“Schools today can try to explain what it’s like to work in a pharmacy, but unless they have that hands-on experience, it won’t make much sense,” Bankson says. He cites the National Training Laboratories’ Learning Pyramid, which claims that students retain only 5 percent of material taught in a lecture, whereas students who actually practice what they are learning retain 75 percent of that material. “We want the students who come to work in our industry to be the best at what they do, and a strong foundation can help make that happen.”