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Around the Columns

Nurses-in-training run hospital simulations

One day Mary Margaret Bayer has a sprained wrist. The next day she is suffering from abdominal pain and depression. Another day she is a concerned mother, worried about her daughter's mysterious rash.

No, Bayer, BSN '64, MA '67, of Columbia isn't a hypochondriac. She's a retired registered nurse who volunteers her acting services as a standardized patient at MU's Russell D. and Mary B. Sheldon Clinical Simulation Center. The lab gives students a chance to practice health care in a realistic but controlled environment. Students from the Sinclair School of Nursing, School of Health Professions and School of Medicine all participate in the simulations, which incorporate both live volunteers and computerized mannequins. Instructors review recordings of the simulations and assess students' performances.

A Sinclair School of Nursing alumni board member told Bayer about the program. "I thought it sounded like something I could do to help students," she says.




Bayer contacted the simulation lab, and the next thing she knew she was in training. "We come in a week before the simulation and sit down with the director of the lab," Bayer says. "She goes over anything she wants emphasized."

This is Bayer's first acting gig. "You never know what life is going to bring," she says. Bayer's knowledge of health care helps her play the roles, but occasionally she wants to assist a struggling student. "It's difficult to keep my mouth shut."



To help train nursing students, Mary Margaret Bayer, BSN '64, MA '67, plays the part of the patient mannequin's mother at the Russell D. and Mary B. Sheldon Clinical Simulation Center. Photo by Nicholas Benner

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