

Frequently Asked Questions

Standardized Patient Lab

The Hannaford Center for Safety, Innovation & Simulation

Q: What is a Standardized Patient (SP)?

A: A person who has been carefully trained to present the physical and emotional characteristics of a real patient to provide an opportunity for healthcare providers to learn, practice, or demonstrate competency in clinical skills.

Q: What is the purpose of using an SP?

A: To provide clinicians with a consistent and measurable method of learning and assessment. Each SP is trained on how to present a specific medical condition in a standardized manner and provide consistent, constructive, and immediate verbal and written feedback.

Q: Who are the learners with whom an SP works?

A: Maine Medical Center medical students, residents, faculty, and allied health professionals.

Q: Where do SP events occur?

A: Our facility is located at the Hannaford Center for Safety, Innovation and Simulation. The SP Lab is an innovative training facility with 10 fully-functional Exam Rooms, one Patient Room, and audio-video equipment for monitoring and recording all encounters real time. The Center also contains a state-of-the-art Control Room where faculty and educators may view encounters in the Exam Rooms, Patient Room, or any high-fidelity or training room within the Simulation Center.

Q: What does an SP job pay?

A: Pay starts at \$15 an hour and may increase depending upon the intensity of the assignment. SPs involved in more sensitive teaching or assignment situations will be paid a higher rate. SP work is per-diem and extremely rewarding. As a Standardized Patient, you will learn about healthcare and provide an important service to future healthcare professionals.

Q: What is an OSCE?

A: An Objective Structured Clinical Encounter. It is a method of teaching and assessing a multitude of clinical skills. Learners are observed and provided direct and immediate feedback by the SP using a predefined checklist evaluating clinical competence.

Q: Are SPs used to practice placing needles?

A: No. If it is necessary to simulate medically invasive procedures, such as procedures that involve needles, learners will use life-size mannequins and/or body-part models in our Skills Lab.

Q: What makes a good SP?

A: Frequent use of email — All SPs must have and use email frequently. Highly flexible schedule — SP activities generally occur during normal business hours. Commitment and reliability — SPs must be committed to the program and able to arrive on time when scheduled for an activity.

Ease with people — SPs must have good communication skills and be able to adapt to working with various types of personalities.

Comfort with your body — SPs are generally dressed as they would be in a doctor's office or hospital – which means in underwear and a patient gown. You may need to allow students to complete a physical exam as necessary for a particular case.

Ability to give and receive constructive feedback — All SPs provide feedback to learners and receive feedback on their work from the program director and/or faculty members Strong desire to contribute to the education of future physicians — The ultimate goal of the SP program is to prepare future clinicians for the real world. By contributing your time, yourself, and your feedback, you are helping future clinicians to be more effective communicators and overall better healthcare providers for future generations of patients.

Q: How do I apply?

A: E-mail splab@mmc.org for the date of our next information session.