U of South Carolina, a Leader in Ultrasound Education, Hosts World Congress in Spring

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COLUMBIA, S.C., Jan. 21, 2011 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- It's been called the stethoscope for the 21st century.

Ultrasound is a valuable tool that allows doctors to diagnose and treat patients quickly and accurately. It's been around for decades, but there has been revolutionary change in the technology in recent years, making the machines smaller, cheaper and smarter.

The University of South Carolina School of Medicine is making its own mark with ultrasound. It's the only medical school in the country using ultrasound as part of the curriculum during all four years of medical school. Medical students at USC are trained to use ultrasound to learn, to diagnose and to treat patients.

"There is no question in my mind that ultrasound is changing how we teach and how we practice medicine," said Dr. Richard Hoppmann, dean of the medical school. "It's a tremendous educational and teaching tool. It helps the students understand and learn anatomy, physiology, pathology -- all areas of medicine."

Because of the university's leading role in ultrasound education, medical schools around the country have visited USC to learn more about ultrasound and physician training. From April 29 - May 1, the USC School of Medicine will host the first World Congress of Ultrasound in Medical Education, bringing medical students, physicians and healthcare professionals from around the world to Columbia.

While ultrasound was once used primarily in the fields of radiology and obstetrics, ultrasound machines are now in use everywhere, from anatomy classrooms to cardiac labs to trauma rooms. Students with basic ultrasound training are able to quickly pinpoint and diagnose problems, often faster and more accurately than experienced physicians doing a standard physical exam. Gallstones can be easily seen; an aortic aneurysm can be detected; there is less guessing and more accuracy when finding an entry location for a blood vessel.

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