To work in healthcare simulation in any capacity today, says KT Waxman, is to lead.

By virtue of the fact that simulation is an emerging specialty and a field unto itself, simulation professionals today are, in effect, pioneers. And for Waxman, who becomes the President of SSH at IMSH later this month, leadership has always been a virtue.

Waxman holds a doctorate in nursing practice, a master’s degree in business administration, and Bachelor of Science in healthcare management. She holds a CHSE and eight additional professional certifications.

For roughly the last 30 years, she has worked in nursing administration and she is an associate professor at the University of San Francisco.

In addition, she is Director of the California Simulation Alliance, which unites simulation users throughout the state of California and beyond.

“I’m passionate about simulation, because I never had any training in simulation in nursing school. My first IV stick was a real patient, my first death was a real patient, and my first code blue was with a real patient. We can simulate all those things so that people know what to do and how to communicate when actual events occur.”

In addition, Waxman champions the concept that simulation facilitates learning and communication among inter-disciplinary teams.

“I am formally trained in nursing, but simulation improves results when used to train groups of professionals who are open teamwork and collaboration.”

As a consultant in 2004, Waxman wrote a grant for the development of the Bay Area Simulation Collaborative, which included 35 schools of nursing and 65 hospitals. It was funded with $1 million from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation to create a regionally based, shared network of educators and faculty dedicated to simulation.
“We created the first formal urban regional collaborative in the country,” Waxman said. “And it became a model.”

Today, as the incoming president of SSH, and as a trailblazer herself for the last 30 years, Waxman is motivated to demonstrate the efficiencies of simulation-based learning.

“Simulation has evolved since the days when it was all about the mannequin (manikin). It really isn’t about the mannequin; it’s about the pedagogy of simulation, and the methodology. And that evolution is forcing us to quantify what we do.”

The measurable effectiveness of simulation can be seen every day, for example through reduced sepsis rates and central line blood infections (CLABSI).

“We now are at a great point in history, we can document what we know and share it with administrators,” she said. And that is how leaders in general — and Waxman in particular — will take simulation in healthcare and SSH to the next level.