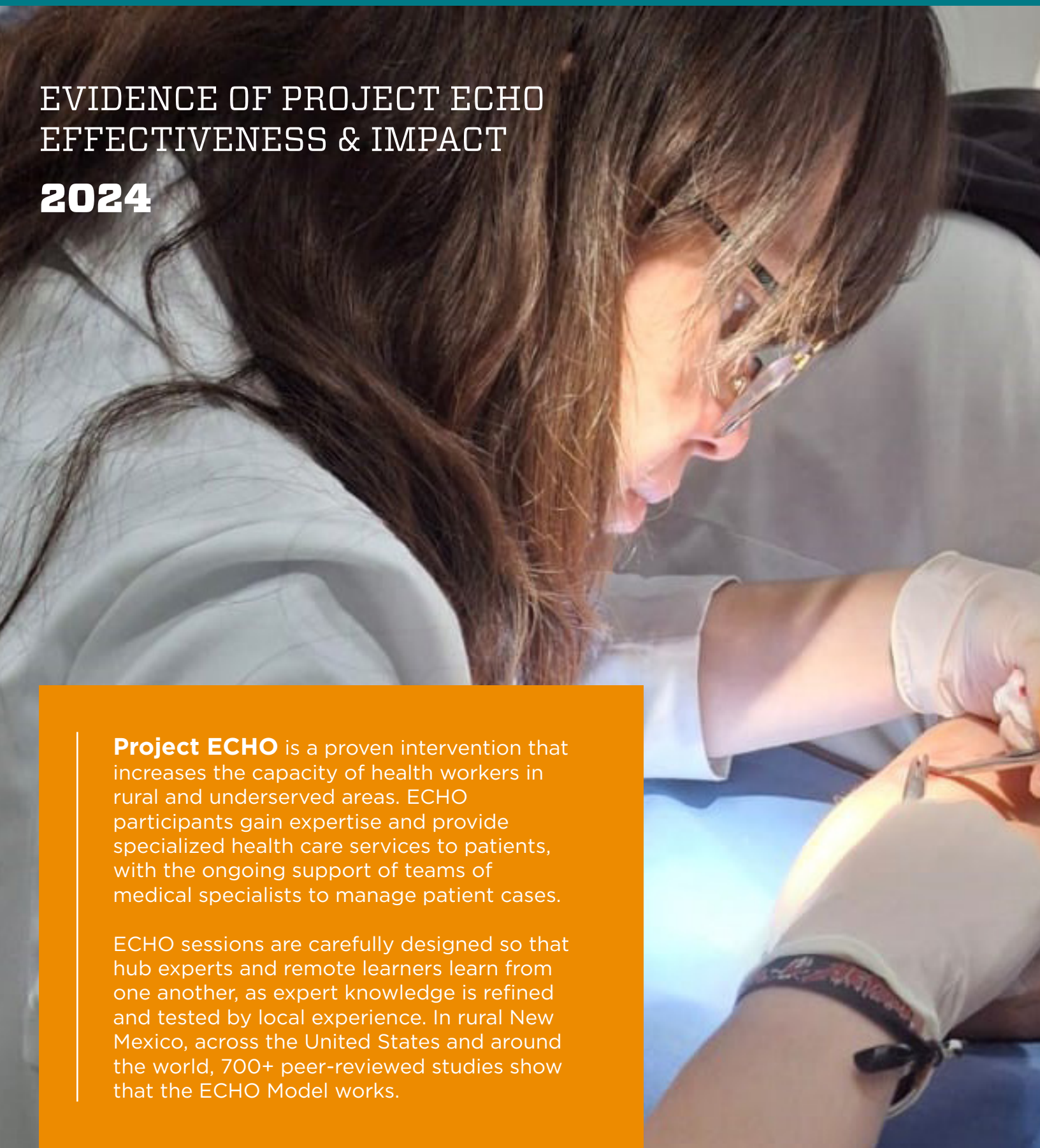
UNM HEALTH SCIENCES

Project ECHO®

EVIDENCE OF PROJECT ECHO EFFECTIVENESS & IMPACT

2024



Project ECHO is a proven intervention that increases the capacity of health workers in rural and underserved areas. ECHO participants gain expertise and provide specialized health care services to patients, with the ongoing support of teams of medical specialists to manage patient cases.

ECHO sessions are carefully designed so that hub experts and remote learners learn from one another, as expert knowledge is refined and tested by local experience. In rural New Mexico, across the United States and around the world, 700+ peer-reviewed studies show that the ECHO Model works.

NEW MEXICO HIGHLIGHTS

IMPACT HEPATITIS C

A 2011 study in the New England Journal of Medicine showed that primary care providers mentored and trained through the ECHO Model were able to treat hepatitis C (HCV) patients with the same outcomes as a specialist at The University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center - definitive evidence that the ECHO Model is an effective way to treat HCV infection in underserved communities.[1]

RESULTS

Primary care providers in rural and underserved communities who were mentored and trained through the ECHO Model were able to treat hepatitis C patients with the same cure rates as a hepatitis C specialist at an academic medical center.

"The Hepatitis C ECHO started a ripple effect. Starting with just one ECHO program, now look where we are: global reach, a proven model, and millions served."

- Dr. Paulina Deming
Associate Professor
UNM College of Pharmacy

IMPACT DIABETES

A 2024 study examined whether rural health care providers, who participated in weekly Endocrinology ECHO (Endo ECHO) telementoring sessions, could help people with diabetes achieve similar outcomes as patients who are seen by endocrinology specialists working in an academic medical center.

Nearly 900 patients of the ECHO-trained providers reduced their A1c levels by 1.2% on average — a significant improvement. For every 1% reduction in A1c levels, the risk of microvascular complications (kidney, eye and nerves) is reduced by 37%, according to research published by The BMJ.[2]

RESULTS

The ECHO Model is an effective intervention for improving diabetes care in rural settings.

IMPACT OPIOID & SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

A 2014 study found that participation in Integrated Addictions and Psychiatry ECHO resulted in significant gains for New Mexico as the state rose to fourth in the nation for the number of buprenorphine-waivered physicians practicing statewide. Prior to this program's launch, New Mexico had only 14 data-waivered physicians per one million residents.[3]

RESULTS

The program was correlated with a 100-fold increase in the number of buprenorphine-waivered physicians practicing statewide.

UNITED STATES HIGHLIGHTS

IMPACT

DIABETES

A 2019 randomized controlled trial conducted in partnership with New York University examined the effectiveness of providers in an endocrinology clinic who were ECHO-trained versus those who were not. Patients treated by ECHO-trained physicians reported improved health status, increase in physical activity and more provider-initiated tests. [6]

RESULTS

This study confirmed that patients who were treated by ECHO-trained providers saw improvements not only in their health but also their quality of treatment.

MENTAL & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

A matched-cohort study within 11 nursing homes in Maine and Massachusetts explored the effect of ECHO training on best practices for treating psychotic episodes in elderly patients. Overall, nursing homes were 75% less likely to physically restrain and 17% less likely to prescribe anti-psychotic medications.[7]

IMPACT

RESULTS

ECHO participation by the nursing homes and their staff improved the overall mental health treatment of their residents and their standards of care.

IMPACT

OPIOID & SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

Nationwide

In 2011, the Veteran's Health Administration launched the Specialty Care Access Network ECHO – Pain Management to mentor primary care providers on best practices for chronic pain management. Providers who presented patient cases for consultation were more likely to connect patients with outpatient physical health services and to initiate antidepressant or non-opioid prescriptions. Between 2012 and 2017, more than 5,000 patients were weaned from opioids. [4/5]

RESULTS

Providers trained and mentored through ECHO reduced opioid prescriptions to their patients by 87% compared to the national reduction of 49%. ECHO providers saw similar declines in the reduction of benzodiazepine-opioid combination therapy.

Missouri

The University of Missouri's Show-Me ECHO used Missouri Medicaid claims data to evaluate the impact of its Pain Management ECHO program.[8]

RESULTS

When compared with non-ECHO providers, ECHO-participating providers significantly reduced their average opioid dose prescribed by 33%, significantly reduced the average daily supply of opioids among their patients by 3%, and their patients saw a 14% reduction in the likelihood of being prescribed unsafe opioid doses.

Texas

The Support Hospital Opioid Use Disorder Treatment (SHOUT) Texas program used the ECHO Model to bolster its Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) training and technical assistance programming for more than 2,500 clinicians and social workers in the state. The SHOUT program resulted in a rapid expansion in the availability of MOUD in hospital settings and in the number of patients initiating OUD treatment during hospitalization.[9]

RESULTS

From the first to the second year of SHOUT implementation (2021-2022), OUD screenings increased nearly eight times (from 438 to 3,409) and patients started on MOUD increased more than five times (174 to 943) in participating hospitals – and similar levels were achieved in 2023. Evaluation of the program shows that 42% of patients screened for OUD began treatment, with a continued 26% being discharged with a coordinated care plan.

GLOBAL HIGHLIGHTS

IMPACT

HIV

In 2015, the CDC partnered with the Namibian Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS) and launched a one-year pilot of the first HIV ECHO. During that year, providers in ten districts received regular ECHO trainings on HIV testing and treatment. Across all participants, there was a 17.8-23% increase in clinical care knowledge, with 30% reporting they were professionally satisfied and 66% reporting that they felt less professionally isolated. Namibia MoHSS took over the HIV ECHO and expanded to over 40 clinical sites, allowingthem to serve more than 140,000 people. [10]

RESULTS

Participants of this study saw overall satisfaction in their professional careers, found it easier to access continuing development credits and reported feeling less isolated-- all of which helped them properly test and treat their patients with HIV.

If this model is provided support—both financially and by policymakers in Africa—it has the potential to reach areas where no other interventions have reached.

- Dr. Leonard Bikinesi
Chief HIV Clinical Mentor
Namibian Ministry of Health & Human Services

CANCER

In 2019, Cameroon Baptist Convention Health Services and MD Anderson created a hybrid ECHO telementoring program and in-person practicum to improve nurses' skills in performing cervical cancer screenings. 60% of the participants reported gaining increased abilities to provide screenings with appropriate referrals and 88% had overall improved ability to provide their patients the proper care while adopting best practices. During the follow-up practicum, trained nurses conducted 3,136 cervical cancer screenings and identified 61 presumptive positive diagnoses for which they offered free treatment. [11]

RESULTS

This study confirmed that the ECHO program and trainings gave nurses the correct knowledge to accurately diagnose and treat their patients.

IMPACT

IMPACT

MENTAL & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

A hybrid ECHO program in the Indian State of Bihar, through a partnership with India's National Institute for Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), created a two-week onsite orientation for psychiatric care followed by months of telementoring through Project ECHO where participants learned how to properly identify and diagnose psychiatric disorders. Participants completed assessments before and after training and treated 23,000 patients over the duration of the program. Participants showed significant results with an overall increase in mental health knowledge and half the medical officers receiving additional accreditation.[12]

RESULTS

This study confirmed that ECHO-trained providers gained crucial knowledge and understanding in how to treat their patients'mental health issues correctly and effectively.

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