

Information for Partners

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTNERING ON VIRTUAL HEALTH WORKFORCE TRAINING IN MAINE

The Center for Excellence in Public Health (CEPH) at the University of New England serves as a resource for providing training on specific health issues to health professionals throughout Maine using the Project ECHO (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes) model.

WHAT IS PROJECT ECHO?

Project ECHO is an innovative guided-practice model developed by the University of New Mexico that facilitates the reduction of health disparities in underserved and remote areas using video conferencing technology. Through tele-mentoring, ECHO employs a “hub-and-spoke” knowledge-sharing approach in which expert teams lead virtual workshops, amplifying capacity for health professionals to deliver best-in-practice care to the underserved in their communities.

Project ECHO also facilitates a wide array of programs in support of mental health and substance use disorders, education, and public health. CEPH at UNE serves as a resource for providing training for health professionals throughout Maine using the ECHO model.

WHAT DOES A SPECIFIC ECHO PROGRAM INVOLVE?

An ECHO program connects a broad array of health professionals for a series of virtual sessions focused around a specific health condition or public health topic. Participants from disparate locations gather monthly, forming a community of practice as they work together in repeated sessions.

During teleECHO™ sessions, subject matter experts deliver didactic material, and one participant presents a case for discussion, allowing for the hub team to share their expertise across the virtual network of “spoke” participants via case-based learning. An ECHO can be developed for virtually any health-related topic and tailored to local circumstances, with the goal of enhancing the capacity of health professionals and stakeholders to address complex health issues within their own communities. CEPH recently developed and facilitated *COVID-19 Matters in Maine*.

WHAT COSTS ARE INVOLVED?

Free for participants, low-cost for sponsor/partner organizations.

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WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS? (TO PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES)

Health professionals who know their patients and clients provide the best treatment, care, and support for them. Through ECHO's online learning networks, health professionals gain the expertise and support they need to manage patients and support clients who have complex, chronic health conditions, regardless of geographic location or access to specialty care. Evaluation data has shown that health professionals often feel happier with their jobs as a result of participating in the ECHO learning community. Once connected to Project ECHO, participants have experienced 1) increased confidence in their ability to offer specialty care for common, complex conditions; 2) improved provider retention; 3) a reduced sense of isolation; and 4) an improved ability to use the latest best practices when caring for patients and clients.

WHAT PROJECT ECHO SERVICES DOES CEPH PROVIDE?

As an ECHO Hub, in addition to its experience implementing the ECHO model, CEPH provides: 1) a customized Zoom delivery platform and tech support; 2) a core team to assist with project management, curriculum planning, session facilitation, and evaluation; 3) an extensive network of public health contacts and content experts throughout Maine and northern New England to facilitate content development, marketing, and recruitment of participants; and 4) university-based CME credit for participants.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT PARTNERING WITH THE CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC HEALTH'S PROJECT ECHO PROGRAM, CONTACT ceph-echo@une.edu