

State Level Evaluation

University of Idaho Project Echo; Real Patient Case Studies, Real Patient Results



In early 2018, the University of Idaho received start-up funding from the Statewide Healthcare Innovation Plan SIM grant to integrate Project ECHO (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes). The intervention is intended to revolutionize medical education and increase workforce capacity to provide best practice specialty care and reduce health disparities.

Through twice monthly seminars and other resources ECHO, primary care doctors, and clinicians across Idaho can share knowledge through use of video conferencing to connect virtual clinics with community providers. Since 80% of Idaho's communities are considered rural, this is especially beneficial for these clinics to increase their ability to provide excellent specialist care to patients in their own communities.

In October of 2018, The University of Idaho was awarded \$374,919 in funding by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. This funding is set to be distributed over a three-year period to offer behavioral health training programs for healthcare professionals in Idaho. A pilot behavioral health ECHO program launched in the fall where 53 healthcare professionals such as physicians, nurse practitioners, and pharmacists are enrolled in training. These individuals represent 37 clinics across 24 communities.

This pilot aims to increase providers ability to better recognize the signs and symptoms of mental disorders and practice de-escalation techniques, provide primary care providers education about various community resources available for patients and establish a referral system in order to direct patients to the necessary resources. By using videoconferencing, ECHO Behavioral Health expects to train at least 200 providers over a three-year period.

In addition to the Behavioral Health Program, Project ECHO also began a videoconference series surrounding opioid addiction in Idaho. Allowing healthcare providers to learn best practices for treating patients with chronic pain or opioid use disorder, connect with peers from around the state to discuss what really works, and get feedback on difficult patient cases from a panel of specialists.

<https://www.uidaho.edu/academics/wwami/echo>