



National Academy of Medicine
Project ECHO® Commitment Statement on Countering the U.S. Opioid Epidemic:
Health Professional Education and Training

Solving opioid addiction in the United States requires expanded access to effective and compassionate treatment and an increased focus on prevention. Project ECHO® (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes) works on both fronts: making best-practice treatment for opioid use disorder (OUD) available in communities across the U.S. and spreading effective pain management approaches that do not rely solely on prescription opioids.

Project ECHO is a global movement that began 15 years ago at the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center (UNM HSC). The ECHO model™ focuses on improving access to quality medical care and disseminating best practices to primary care clinicians in rural and underserved communities. ECHO uses telementoring to give participants access to specialty consultation, and case-based learning to ensure that participants can apply what they learn to their own practice settings. The ECHO model is deployed worldwide, and its success uniquely situates ECHO to mobilize in the face of increasing opioid deaths across the globe.

Project ECHO and its partners commit to offering high-quality education and training for practicing health professionals and pre-licensure trainees so they may combat the joint crises posed by chronic pain and opioid misuse. ECHO hubs, located at most academic centers nationwide offer more than 100 opioid and pain-related teleECHO™ programs. Federal programs include Army and Navy ECHO Pain, Veteran Affairs Specialty Care Access Network (SCAN) Pain and Opioid ECHOs, and a combined UNM HSC/ Indian Health Service ECHO Pain and Opioid Management ECHO. Each addresses at least one of the goals of combating the opioid crisis in the United States: improving chronic pain management, including the use of non-opioid pain management strategies; improving screening for OUD; increasing access to medication-assisted treatment (MAT); and teaching opioid harm reduction strategies, such as naloxone co-prescribing.

Project ECHO's commitment includes education for capacity building. The teams who serve as subject matter experts in pain and opioid-related care represent a broad variety of practice disciplines, and model an integrative approach to care. A National Community Health Workers Opioid ECHO program brings the community's perspective and unique needs into the conversation about best practice care and harm reduction. ECHO uses advances in technology to make its offerings as accessible as possible, and creates virtual communities of practice in the process.

ECHO-affiliated faculty advance our commitment to ending the opioid and pain crises by serving as policy advisors or experts to state and federal agencies which promulgate guidelines, recommendations and legislation that have a direct impact on prevention and care. All members of the global ECHO community agree to share research results, curricula, model practices and policies freely with partners.