

NICoE-ECHO Project

Background: ECHO is an acronym for the **Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes**. Project ECHO was developed at the University of New Mexico (UNM) to enhance the state's capacity to treat Hepatitis C within their own healthcare system. By utilizing video teleconferencing, a team of Hepatitis C experts at the UNM were able to connect with primary care managers (PCMs) across the state who were treating patients with Hepatitis C. This created a network of providers that could learn from each other by discussing cases, participating in didactic presentations, sharing best practices and reviewing lessons learned.

ECHO and Traumatic Brain Injury: Due to the success of the original ECHO model, other ECHO projects across the country have been launched to support different diseases with the help and support of UNM who provides one day "how-to" sessions. In 2012, the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps and the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs) & Director of TRICARE Management Activity discussed the need for the Military Healthcare System (MHS) to adopt telemedicine and telehealth initiatives to augment the MHS' treatment capabilities. Specifically, they identified Project ECHO as a viable solution in treating traumatic brain injury (TBI) and psychological health (PH) issues.

The NICoE-ECHO Project: The NICoE (National Intrepid Center of Excellence), located at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, MD, is a Department of Defense (DoD) Institute dedicated to providing cutting-edge evaluation, treatment planning, research, and education for service members and their families dealing with the complex interactions of TBI and PH conditions. Building on the knowledge base and treatment efforts already underway throughout the MHS, the NICoE-ECHO Project serves as a conduit to bring together all Services' efforts in a network focused on disseminating standardized treatment methodologies of TBI and PH to enhance and augment existing efforts.

The NICoE-ECHO is a bi-monthly two hour medical "Grand Rounds" session to include a case presentation for discussion and a lecture given by a subject matter expert in the field of TBI and PH. Several benefits of the NICoE-ECHO sessions include:

- Enhancing standardization of treatment methods for mild to moderate TBI and related issues throughout the MHS
- Providing access to an array of specialists to allow for an interdisciplinary exchange focused on addressing the needs of those with mild to moderate TBI and related issues
- Advancing best practices and knowledge through provider exchange and collaboration

If you have questions about NICoE-ECHO Project, please contact us at

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