Project ECHO Bibliography   Project ECHO

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Implementation of the first Project ECHO Superhub in Australia

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CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Implementation of the first Project ECHO Superhub in Australia

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Introduction: In March 2019, Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service (CHQ) became the first organisation licenced to establish a Project ECHO Superhub in Australia. CHQ has successfully replicated and scaled the ECHO model since 2016 to a range of population health priorities in response to health needs of vulnerable child and youth populations across Australia and New Zealand. Having a locally-accessible Superhub in the Asia-Pacific region presents a convenient alternative for government, non-government and community organisations to access local, contextualised training and ongoing mentorship to replicate the ECHO model within their own jurisdictions.

Short description of practice change implemented: CHQ's Project ECHO operations have demonstrated the model's capacity to integrate care across the region through evidence-based, best practice hub-and-spoke knowledge sharing networks. As a Superhub, CHQ will train, license and mentor primary, secondary, tertiary health organisations and organisations beyond the healthcare sector to expedite ECHO's potential. Emerging hub organisations will then deliver online, interactive case discussions via the ECHO model, empowering the interprofessional participants to practice at top of license.

Aim and theory of change: CHQ will train and mentor organisations across the Asia-Pacific Region to replicate the ECHO model. This will grow inter-agency collaborations across the broader system to achieve efficiencies and improve quality of care while addressing needs of vulnerable populations.

Targeted population and stakeholders: Teams of health, human service and education organisations across the Asia-Pacific Region.

Timeline: From August 2019 onward.

Highlights (innovation, Impact and outcomes):

- First Superhub in Australia;

- Timely, accessible and local access to mentorship and support for teams;

- Membership to the global metaECHO community;

- Participation in a global response to address disparities in an innovative and collaborative way.

Sustainability and Transferability: The Project ECHO model is a highly sustainable way to disseminate knowledge and support enhanced service delivery. ECHO's interactive, bi-directional learning environment is cost-effective and scalable. ECHO's potential benefits (cost, scalability, reliability, acceptability) exceed traditional alternative one-way education/practice development modalities (webinars, lectures) as the way forward in capacity building. The model eliminates geography as a participation barrier, and through its learner-centric approach responds to the needs of interprofessional participants.

Conclusions: The ECHO Superhub will:

- Increase the utilisation and replication of the ECHO model, which can enable integrated care across the Asia-Pacific;

- Provide a convenient, local alternative to access training;

- Foster collaborative, inter-agency partnerships; and

- Contribute to research, evaluation and knowledge dissemination.

Discussions: The ECHO model has been utilised in North America since 2003. By introducing an ECHO Superhub in Australia, organisations from across the Asia-Pacific region can now leverage local support and mentorship to replicate the model. Economic benefits will be realised by the whole of system over time.

Lessons learned: Implementing CHQ's ECHO Superhub relied on a strong, sustainable partnership with the ECHO Institute, University of New Mexico. Demand from new organisations wishing to adopt the ECHO model to support addressing vulnerable populations within their local jurisdictions is growing.