

Indian Country ECHO Programs

Project ECHO’s mission to help get the right care in the right place at the right time to the people who need it most, through educating and empowering local healthcare providers, drives our partnership initiatives supporting Native American communities. Our goal is to support development of communities of learning and practice that connect clinicians serving Native American populations and increasing access to the highest quality of specialty care for those populations. We work with a range of local and national partners, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Indian Health Service (IHS), and the Albuquerque Area Southwest Tribal Epidemiology Center (AASTEC). Through these partnerships, we have successfully launched a series of teleECHO programs addressing a range of conditions and healthcare issues, from HIV and Hepatitis C (HCV) to tuberculosis, rheumatology and chronic pain. ECHO also supports education and training of Community Health Representatives (CHRs) in prevention and management strategies for type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and stroke to enable them to take better care of their communities.

Project ECHO’s partnership with the IHS began with several initiatives addressing HCV in Native American communities. The **Indian Country HCV ECHO program** launched an HCV ECHO in 2013 connecting IHS, tribal and urban providers join from all over Indian Country with a multidisciplinary team of specialists to provide expert advice and training on the management of HCV patient cases. ECHO faculty and staff also conduct site visits to IHS, tribal, and urban (I/T/U) clinic sites to educate on disease-specific topics like HCV and HIV and provide assistance on IHS system-related questions, in coordination with an IHS liaison. ECHO invites providers new to HCV treatment to a monthly HCV provider training in which providers come for a day of training in clinical guidelines and shadow doctors in the University of New Mexico (UNM) HCV Clinic. Project ECHO also mentors our partners in launching their own HCV ECHO programs for Indian Country; these partners include the Cherokee Nation, the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board, and Alaska Area IHS. The **Indian Country HIV ECHO program**, a partnership with the IHS and the New Mexico AIDS Education and Training Center, launched in 2013 and connects IHS and tribal clinicians in the southwest region of the United States with experts at the UNM Health Sciences Center and Gallup Indian Medical Center.

The **IHS TB ECHO** program for the Navajo Nation is facilitated in collaboration with the Navajo Nation, the IHS, the CDC, the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH), and the Arizona Department of Health Services (AZDHS); it launched in January 2016. This initiative connects TB specialists from the IHS, NMDOH, and AZDHS with IHS primary care providers, public health nurses, and Navajo Nation TB Techs to strengthen case management of Navajo TB cases and promote quality improvement of Navajo Nation TB services.

INDIAN COUNTRY ECHO

Indian Country ECHO Programs:

- Indian Country HIV
- Indian Country HCV
- Indian Health Service TB
- CDC Good Health and Wellness in Indian Country
- AASTEC Partners in Good Health and Wellness
- Chronic Pain

Training

- Diabetes Community Resource Education Worker Training (CREW)
- Community Addictions Recovery Specialist Training (CARS)
- HCV Provider Training

INDIAN COUNTRY PARTNERS

- Arizona Department of Health
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- Indian Health Service
- Navajo Nation Department of Health
- New Mexico Department of Health
- Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board
- Seattle Indian Health Board
- Urban Indian Health Institute

Since 2014 ECHO has supported implementation of monthly ECHO sessions for the CDC’s **Good Health and Wellness in Indian Country** population health program serving awardees and partners. The awardees discuss and share best practices related to implementation of public health and policy strategies to prevent chronic disease in their communities including Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke. Awardees include 12 tribal nations and 11 tribal epidemiology centers or Indian Health Boards.

Project ECHO’s robust Community Health Worker (CHW) program supports the training of CHRs in Native American communities across several partnership initiatives. The **Partners in Good Health and Wellness in Indian Country program** is a partnership with the AASTECC and the IHS. This program trains tribal CHRs who work for the 27 IHS Albuquerque-area tribes to help tribal members prevent and manage type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, stroke, and associated risk factors. The **Diabetes Community Resource Education Worker (CREW) Training** facilitates tribal CHRs to

participate in Project ECHO’s ongoing CREW teleECHO clinic, which trains and supports CHWs to become experts in teaching self-management to patients with diabetes. The **Community Addictions Recovery Specialist (CARS) Training** builds the capacity of CHWs and CHRs to provide health education, clinical support, referrals and resources for patients in recovery or seeking treatment for addictions, with a focus on alcohol and opiate addiction.



ECHO Institute Indian Country Programs

- Albuquerque Area Southwest Tribal Epi Center Partners in Good Health and Wellness Program
- CDC Good Health and Wellness in Indian Country Program
- Chronic Pain and Headache ECHO
- Indian Country Hepatitis C ECHO
- Indian Health Service TB ECHO

Other ECHO programs open to IHS, tribal and Urban Indian Health Center providers include the **Rheumatology ECHO** and **Chronic Pain and Opioid Management ECHO programs** led by specialists at the UNM Health Sciences Center. In partnership with the IHS, Project ECHO has offered three IHS Enduring Continuing Medical Education (CME) Activities for healthcare providers in **immunizations** at IHS and tribal healthcare facilities. Project ECHO also facilitates access to quality healthcare and health knowledge for underserved Native American populations through **special lectures** and programs in response to **public health urgencies and emergencies**, including special education and collaboration sessions on Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and Hantavirus facilitated by the CDC, IHS and the NMDOH and targeted to the frontline providers serving populations affected by these public health issues.

Additional ECHO partners serving Native American, Alaska Native and First Nations (Canada) communities implement ECHO programs covering several topics. The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium conducts Palliative Care as well as Pain and Opioid Management ECHO programs serving Alaska Natives. The Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board implements a Substance Use Disorder/Opioid Use Disorder ECHO program and a Diabetes ECHO program. They will soon launch LGBTQ Two Spirit and PrEP and HIV Prevention ECHO programs as well. The Center for Addiction and Mental Health collaborates with the University of Toronto to implement an Ontario First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Wellness to ECHO program addressing mental wellness from a wholistic perspective, including traditional teachings.