ECHO Care: a program to care for complex patients

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ECHO Care is a special health care program designed to support patients insured by Medicaid managed care who have complex health care needs and high costs of care
Goals of ECHO Care

- Improve quality of care
- Decrease cost of care
- Improve patient satisfaction
Collaboration

- Federal CMMI grant
- Project ECHO has ECHO Care partnerships with:
  - NM state Medicaid office (HSD)
  - All of the NM Medicaid managed care organizations (MCOs)
  - Numerous Community Health Centers (CHCs)
- MCOs jointly provided salaries for the ECHO Care teams
- CHCs provided the clinic locations
The most complex and costly patients

- Multiple complex illnesses
- Doubly or “triply” diagnosed—physical, mental, and addiction diagnoses
- Severe social barriers to health
- Limited social support
Where are the ECHO Care patients?

ECHO Care teams are located in “hotspots”

- All NM Medicaid patients ranked by likelihood of hospitalization in next year
- Mapped location of highest risk patients
- Up to 1/3 homeless
Two or more poorly controlled chronic complex diseases

One hospitalization in past 6 months and another in past 12 months
- OR

3 or more ED visits in past 6 months
How does ECHO Care address these problems?

• Improves primary care
  - Team-based, multidisciplinary primary care
  - Coordinated, high-intensity care
  - Integrated physical and mental health care
  - Addresses social barriers
  - Focus on “transitions” of care
  - Not billed as fee-for-service care

• Improves access to coordinated specialty care
  – ECHO Complex Care Clinic (CCC)
Multidisciplinary, Integrated Teams

- NP
- CHW
- RN
- Counselor

patient

Psychiatry
Infectious Disease
Pharmacy
Clinical Social Work
Addiction
ECHO Complex Care Specialists

Etc.
ECHO Complex Care Clinic

Improved access to coordinated specialty care
ECHO Complex Care Clinic

• Case-based learning
  – Synchronized treatment recommendations from multidisciplinary specialists
  – Medical, behavioral and social aspects of care
  – Resource sharing among teams
  – Identifying systems barriers

• ECHO specialists also available for phone consultation to our teams
Implementation

• Launched 6 ECHO Care teams starting 10/2013 and ending 6/2016

• Project ECHO provided intensive training and support
  – In-person training including motivational interviewing, trauma-informed care, crisis intervention, home visiting
  – Weekly teleconferences before Complex Care Clinic, divided into disease-specific blocks including addiction, psychiatric illness, diabetes, liver disease, etc.
  – Weekly Complex Care Clinic for case presentation and discussion
ECHO Care evaluation

• Analysis of claims data
  – Utilization
  – Costs
  – Quality measures

• ECHO Care Surveys
  – Patient Satisfaction Survey – comparison of baseline and every 6 months following enrollment
  – Surveys of ECHO Care team members and clinic administration

• Qualitative evaluation
  – Interviews with ECHO Care patients, caregivers, MCO care coordinators, and ECHO Care team members, and Complex Care Clinic specialists
Challenges

• Contractual and legal relationship with 4 Managed Care Organizations, NM State Medicaid, and clinics
• Recruiting team leads
• Cultural clashes within teams and staff turnover
• Locating and recruiting patients
• IT/data collection
• Disenrollments
Strengths

- 770 patients recruited
- Excellent, integrated care as demonstrated by improved outcomes (to be published)
- Complex Care Clinic
- Many products for replication of this model