

Project ECHO[®] in Geriatric Mental Health

Improving outcomes, the patient experience, and cost of care

Our Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes (ECHO), sponsored by the Office of Mental Health, provides Skilled Nursing Facility clinicians with skills and knowledge to treat complex patients in their own practices.

We work to improve health outcomes and the experience of the patient and family while reducing the cost of care.

Objectives of Project ECHO in Geriatric Mental Health:

- Help integrate behavioral health services into Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs)
- Establish TeleECHO Clinics that connect “hub” UR Medicine specialists (from psychiatry, geriatrics, nursing, social work, psychology, and pharmacy) with satellite SNFs sites across New York State

Benefits for Participating SNFs:

- Access to a multidisciplinary team of mental health and dementia care specialists
- Team-based interdisciplinary professional development
- Expanded delivery of evidence-based, best-practice care
- Improved health outcomes for patients and caregivers
- Cost savings at service system level by decreasing unnecessary service use
- Increased practitioner and patient satisfaction
- CME credits at no cost or travel

How it Works:

TeleECHO clinics are case-based, educational experiences. Community clinicians develop “knowledge networks” and share best practices through a combination of short presentations and case-based discussions with content experts.

The clinics run bi-weekly for 60 minutes. Continuing Medical Education (CME/CE) credits will be provided for each hour of participation.

Why ECHO in Geriatric Mental Health Is Needed:

As the older adult population in New York State grows, so does the number of seniors with mental illness and dementia. As a public health challenge, this brings impaired quality of life (including morbidity and mortality) and increased healthcare utilization and cost.

Specialty care for late-life psychiatric and memory disorders is associated with better outcomes and lower costs.

In New York State, people with mental illness account for 30% of new nursing home admissions. These individuals may not have access to behavioral health or memory care specialties, so there is an urgent need to support long-term care clinicians in providing quality behavioral health care for these residents.

The NYS Office of Mental Health (OMH) is sponsoring Telepsychiatry services in Skilled Nursing Facilities that are accepting patients from OMH Psychiatric Centers. The program is by the University Of Rochester Medicine Department of Psychiatry. The University Of Rochester Telepsychiatry services expands upon the OMH Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes (ECHO) Geriatric Mental Health (GEMH) virtual clinics that are currently provided biweekly to skilled nursing facilities accepting patients from OMH facilities during the transition period. The program is designed to provide timely psychiatric consultations for skilled nursing facility residents using interactive telemedicine technology. This continues OMH's commitment to support SNFs meeting the psychiatric needs of patients on the continuum of care.

To enroll in our biweekly TeleECHO[®] clinics, please email Project Coordinator Linda Williams at linda_williams@urmc.rochester.edu or call (585) 362-5144.



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