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Go Back

Print Page

## Health center leaders talk primary care fixes at international conference

By Special to the Press

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MIDDLETOWN >> Community Health Center President and CEO Mark Masselli and VP/Chief Quality Officer and Director of CHC's Weitzman Institute Dr. Daren Anderson were invited to give presentations on primary care innovation as part of the first-ever convening of the Global ECHO Community in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Sept. 11-13.

Project Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes started as an intervention to improve access to Hepatitis C treatment in rural New Mexico. It has now transformed into an international model for strengthening primary care and improving outcomes for underserved patients with a wide range of conditions.

CHC's Weitzman Institute has successfully replicated this program and holds weekly ECHO sessions for the treatment of HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C and chronic pain, as well as a session dedicated to integrating Buprenorphine maintenance treatment in primary care.

The three-day conference, A New Norm for Healthcare: The First Convening of the Global ECHO Community, brought together ECHOists from 22 states and six countries to share best practices, and to explore emerging issues.

Masselli delivered a TED-style talk focusing on CHC's involvement as one of the first 10 sites – and the first federally qualified health center — to successfully replicate the telehealth program, originally created by the University of New Mexico.

“We see Project ECHO as a tool to bring vitality back to primary care. It's a way to create a culture of change - for making ongoing improvement part of how we do business,” Masselli said during his talk.

Anderson participated as part of a panel of speakers comprised of early adopters of the ECHO model. The panel discussed methods for innovating and spreading ECHO to make it available to larger numbers of providers, and how to best evaluate the outcomes.

“Our work at the Weitzman Institute focused on developing, studying, and refining the ECHO model received national and international attention in Albuquerque,” he said. “We are working to turn ECHO into a comprehensive platform for primary care redesign. It was extremely exciting to present and be a part of this historic gathering.”

The talks spurred conversations among decision makers from organizations like GE, Robert Wood

Johnson Foundation, Kaiser Permanent, the Brookings Institute, and others, on how Project ECHO can be adapted to spark organizational change.

More information about CHC's ECHO programs can be found by visiting [quality.chc1.com](http://quality.chc1.com).

Go Back

Print Page

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