

# Federal Telemedicine News

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## State Telehealth Program Expands

Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC) a state-wide primary care system established in 1972 based in Middletown, Connecticut, is expanding their telehealth program to Delaware. The program uses Project ECHO which is an innovative program that uses video conferencing and case-based learning to expand access to specialty care for underserved patients.

Underserved patients suffering from chronic debilitating pain face many treatment issues such as not having access to specialists due to insurance status, unreliable transportation, inefficient referral systems, and long wait times.

According to the Institute of Medicine, chronic pain affects 100 million American adults which is more than the number of Americans affected by heart disease, cancer, and diabetes combined. Pain costs the U.S. up to \$635 billion annually in medical treatment and lost productivity.

It is now possible for primary care providers from Westside Family Healthcare, a network of community health centers in Delaware, to

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participate in the Project ECHO Pain Management program. The program is fully supported by the Delaware Health and Social Services (DHSS) Division of Public Health, Delaware Prescription Drug Action Committee (PDAC), and Delaware Telehealth Coalition.

The ECHO Project is going to join Delaware's specialists, primary care providers, and multiple clinicians with expertise in pharmacology, behavioral health, primary care, and alternative therapies to effectively address the needs of individual patients via weekly video conferencing sessions to be held at Westside Family Healthcare of Delaware.

The video conferencing sessions will discuss cases and explore treatment options for patients with complex issues that involve chronic pain management. Providers can participate with a personal computer, tablet, or smartphone at sites with cellular and/or Wi-Fi connectivity.

"We are thrilled to see Project ECHO breaking geographical boundaries with the use of telehealth technology to address a serious health issue that is prevalent in both states," stated Dr. Daren Anderson, VP and Chief Quality Officer of CHC. He added, "There is no single approach to managing chronic pain."

"The goal of Project ECHO is to enable Delaware's health providers to manage complex pain conditions," said Dr. Gerard Galluci, DHSS Medical Director. "Pain management is an important area of focus for the healthcare community and there is a need to build capacity to be able to use

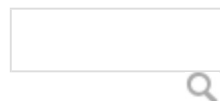
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## Contact us

Contact the editor, Carolyn Bloch, at [cb \(at\) cbloch.com](mailto:cb@cbloch.com)

innovative technology for new treatment options.”

In 2014, DHSS will evaluate Project ECHO results and will partner with the Delaware Telehealth Coalition to find ways to use telehealth for medical education, intervention, prevention, healthcare administrative tasks, and for health advocacy.

For more information, email Sarah Noonan Davis, Project Director, at [Sarah.Noonan-Davis@westsidehealth.org](mailto:Sarah.Noonan-Davis@westsidehealth.org) or call 302-656-8292.

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