



# Project Next Steps: Improving Pain Management in Primary Care with Project ECHO and eConsults

Daren Anderson, MD, Principal Investigator  
VP/Chief Quality Officer, Community Health Center, Inc.  
Director, Weitzman Institute  
[andersd@chc1.com](mailto:andersd@chc1.com)



# Project Next Steps



- **Design:** Year-long, non-randomized, pre-post intervention with comparison group.
- **Setting:** 16 sites from two Federally Qualified Health Centers:
  - Community Health Center, Inc. (CT)
  - El Rio Community Health Center (AZ).
- **Participants:**
  - **Intervention:** Primary care medical (PCP) and behavioral health (BHP) providers from each site
  - **Control:** Primary care medical providers from each site
- **Intervention**
  - Weekly project ECHO® Pain sessions for case-based learning
  - Submission of electronic consultations (eConsults) to pain specialist team at Integrative Pain Center of Arizona

## Analysis Plan:

### Quantitative:

#### PCPs:

- Know-Pain-50 (KP-50) knowledge survey
- University of New Mexico Project ECHO Pain Knowledge Survey
- University of New Mexico Pain Self-Efficacy Survey
- Dobscha self-efficacy survey

#### BHPs:

- Behavioral Health Attitudes and Knowledge Regarding Chronic Pain survey
- Behavioral Health Decision-making Regarding Pain survey

### Project ECHO:

- Chart review – all intervention PCP patients with pain
- Chart review – patients with pain presented at ECHO
- Project ECHO Satisfaction Survey

### Qualitative:

- Focus groups with PCPs, BHPs, pain specialist team

# Results

## PCP Pain Self-Efficacy

PCPs who participated in Project ECHO Pain exhibited a statistically significant increase in self-efficacy to manage patients with chronic pain between baseline (M=4.21) and post-intervention (M= 5.08,  $p < .001$ ) [Ideal Score = 7.0]

## PCP Attitudes and Beliefs Re: Pain

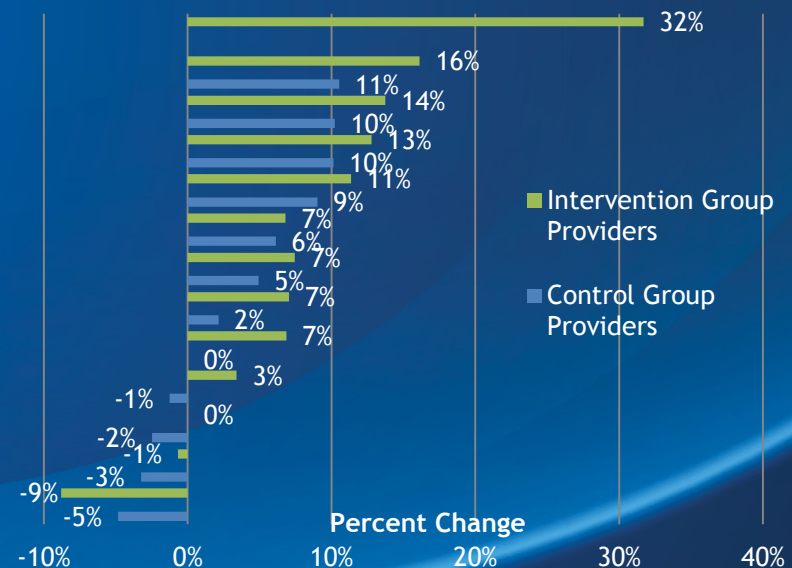
PCPs who participated in Project ECHO Pain:

- Were more aware of and concerned about the issue of addiction and prescription opioids than control PCPs ( $p = .06$ )
- Were more likely than control PCPs to:
  - Use pain assessments or monitoring tools ( $p = .02$ )
  - Use opioid agreements ( $p = .05$ )

## PCP Pain Knowledge

PCPs who participated in Project ECHO Pain exhibited a statistically significant increase in pain management knowledge between baseline (M= 157.00) and post-intervention (M= 169.54,  $p = .001$ ). [Max Score = 250]

### Change in PCP Pain Knowledge



# Results contd.

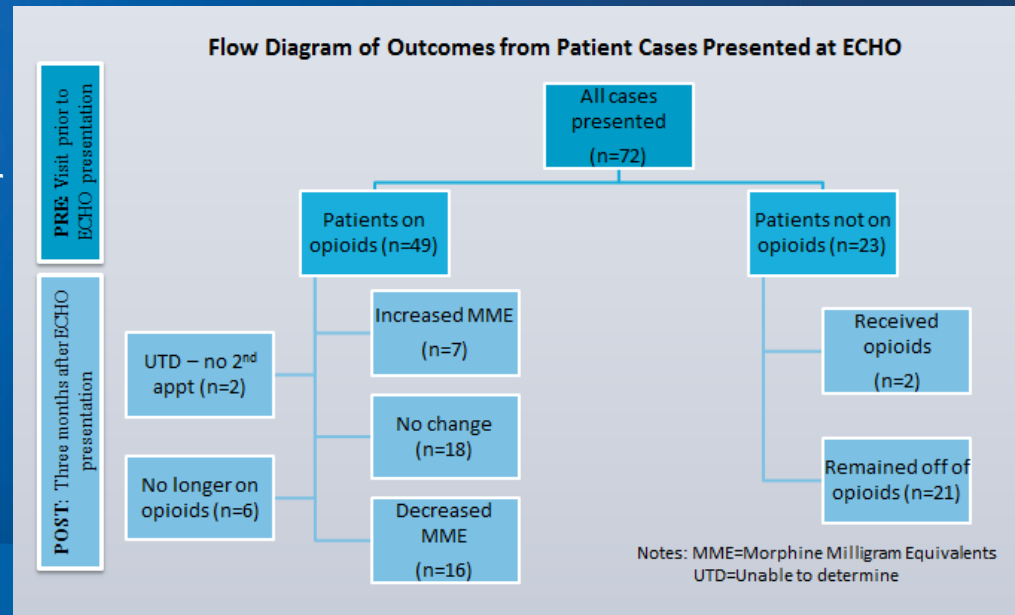
## Operational Data:

- 50 two-hour Project ECHO sessions held
- 50 didactic presentations delivered
- 15 PCP and 15 BHP participants
- 107 total unique patients presented



## Chart Review: Patients Presented at ECHO

- Among the 72 unique patients presented by CHCI providers:
  - 31% of patients had the dose of their prescription opioids reduced after presentation of their case at ECHO
  - Average pain score decreased from 7.02 to 6.81 (on a 10-point scale)
  - Frequency of behavioral health co-management increased from 45% pre-presentation at ECHO to 52% post-presentation



# Impact on Healthcare Community



- Project ECHO is a scalable intervention that uses readily accessible technology to provide education and support to primary care providers for improving their management of chronic pain
- This unique form of medical education resulted in improved knowledge and improved confidence for medical and behavioral health providers but also resulted in measurable changes in practice
- Reduction in opioids and increases in behavioral health co-management as demonstrated in this study are important steps to addressing the epidemic of prescription opioid misuse and poor treatment of pain nationwide.