



# MEDICAL HEALTH HOMES

*Promoting Integrated, Person-Centered Care for  
People with Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities*

## NC Family Support Project ECHO 2021

**Project ECHO** (Extension of Community Health Outcomes) is designed to spread knowledge, expand capacity, and accelerate collective wisdom. It uses a guided-practice and mentoring model that links interdisciplinary teams of specialists (the hub) with primary care providers and other health and human service providers in multiple sites in the community (the spokes). This knowledge sharing network creates a learning loop among specialists and community providers.

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*Collaboration is at the heart  
of the ECHO model.*

- Dr. Arora, MD, Founder

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### NC Family Support ECHO programs

Designed to support families in navigating multiple, complex, and challenging systems; reach families living in rural communities challenged by multiple barriers to care; support Medicaid transformation and whole-person care needs.

Following the successful pilot program conducted January – June 2020 in Western North Carolina, two Family Support ECHO programs were launched in 2020-2021. The WNC FS ECHO program offered 8 sessions to 12 participants from October 2020- through May 2021. A central FS ECHO conducted 8 sessions that were attended by 13 participants between February and May 2021.

### Evaluation Findings Across NC Family Support ECHO Programs

- 100% of participants said they would participate in another ECHO program
- High satisfaction rates
- Increased knowledge of community resources
- Connecting families to appropriate healthcare providers and resources
- Connecting families to crisis services and resources
- Connect a family to the Social Security Administration for benefits enrollment
- Identify additional financial support resources for families who are uninsured or under-insured
- Discuss the educational system process with families

Participant: *“It  
has been a  
total lifeline.”*

### Participant Feedback

*“I love that ECHO set a precedence of everyone is here to learn and has value to give.”*

*“I didn’t expect it to be as **powerful** as it was. I read the stuff ahead of time and got it and didn’t expect it to be as **informational, helpful, and informative**. It did wow me. The expertise of the people participating was amazing. I think it **exceeded expectations**. Experiencing it is better than reading about it.*

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*“The biggest surprise was figuring out that through listening to other people during the case studies just sitting there and having ah-ha moments and using my real-life experiences...so eye-opening and gave me more confidence.”*

*“At the beginning when I filled out the form there were areas, I thought I was an expert in, and I think ECHO helped me to see there is a lot of information and **you can always learn something new**. Things are constantly changing.”*

*“I have **more resources now** than I did before.”*

### 2021 and Beyond Plans:

- Western NC will launch its third cohort in the fall of 2021.
- An eastern Family Support ECHO program will launch in the fall of 2021.
- On-going collaboration with UNC TEACCH Autism ECHO programs for primary care and mental health providers.
- Supporting development of a Project ECHO Network-NC.

Participant: *“I think it is a program that should continue.”*

### Alignment of NC Family Support ECHO and Medicaid Transformation

- Better care can be achieved through the provision of family support services that are person and family-centered and accessible to the family and individual within their community.
- Family support services promote healthier people and healthier communities by emphasizing the need to work collaboratively with community partners to address unmet resource needs and reduce health disparities.
- Smarter spending means paying for value and innovation that results in access appropriate care and promoting quality of life for people with I/DD and their families.

### Enhancing Family Support Services in NC

- Service definitions need to allow for a flexible definition of family
- Flexible funding so families can address their social determinants of health and health-related needs in a timely and flexible way
- Adequate reimbursement rate for family navigation services
- Valuing the lived experience of family members
- Access to family support and navigation services should be easy, flexible, available in multiple places, such as schools, communities of faith, and medical practices
- Standard Plans and Tailored Plans should offer access to family support and navigation services to their members
- Support families who are not eligible for Medicaid to access family support services
- Evaluate the outcomes of family support and navigation services and how this can be tied to value-based care and reimbursement