Integrating Health Literacy into the Show-Me ECHO Project

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Background

Show-Me ECHO (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes) program uses videoconferencing technology and telehealth to connect teams of interdisciplinary experts with primary care providers around Missouri. The discussions with, and mentoring from, specialists help prepare primary care providers to give their patients the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

ECHO Process

People need easier access to specialty care.
There aren't enough specialists to treat everyone, especially in rural areas.
Project ECHO aims specialists to train primary care clinicians remotely. Now more doctors and nurses can provide specialty care to their patients.

Health Literacy Programs and Services

Plain Language Strategies
Teach Back Implementation
Brown Bag Medication Reviews
Disease-Specific Analogies
15 Minute Didactics

• Introduction to health literacy
• Strategies for clear communication
• The teach-back method
• Create a health literacy improvement plan
• Brown Bag medicine reviews
• Use health education materials effectively

Results

Each ECHO telehealth clinic is unique and has specific health literacy needs, both from the specialty teams and individual primary care provider participants.

The evaluation component of the ECHO program includes pre and post survey questions related to health literacy uptake, and provider self-efficacy in using health literacy universal precautions. While results from these surveys are not currently available, our hypothesis is that educating primary care providers in Missouri about the role health literacy plays in patient-provider interactions will help them identify and address patient communication barriers.

Conclusions

Show-Me ECHO has the potential to make a real difference in the way health care is provided in Missouri and by incorporating health literacy in the program, more providers will be able to learn about health literacy, to integrate health literacy principles and techniques into their practice to improve communication with patients and increase patient understanding.