

Improving health care access through virtual health & telehealth solutions

For decades, **MCD Global Health (MCD)** has served as an expert and leader in the planning and deployment of virtual health and telehealth solutions for improving the health and well-being of rural and underserved populations.

MCD's team works closely with state agencies, health systems, Federally Qualified Health Centers, Critical Access Hospitals, Rural Health Clinics, health care consumers, and many others.

Since 2011, MCD has served as home to the **Northeast Telehealth Resource Center (NETRC)**, one of 12 Regional Telehealth Resources Centers funded through the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to increase access to quality health care services for rural and medically underserved populations. The NETRC guides telehealth program development, training, and technical assistance throughout the Northeastern states of **Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, and New York.**

“All teach, all learn” with Project ECHO®

The MCD Project ECHO® approach is an extension of the mission and vision set forth by the University of New Mexico's **Project ECHO® (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes)**, a lifelong learning and guided practice model that revolutionizes medical education and increases workforce capacity to provide best-practice specialty care and reduce health disparities. In 2018, MCD became a formal **ECHO® Replication Hub** through an agreement with the ECHO® Institute, acknowledging our competence to deliver quality ECHO® programming in accordance with the model and fidelity.

95% of Primary Care Providers reported improved ability to care for complex pediatric cases.

91% of School Staff reported improved confidence to foster students' social, emotional, & behavioral skills.

Project ECHO® for Pediatric Mental Health Access

In collaboration with the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention **Maine Pediatric and Behavioral Health Partnership (MPBHP)**, MCD has led the implementation of Project ECHO® to serve Maine's mission of meeting the behavioral health crisis within its population of children and adolescents, especially in rural and medically underserved areas. Our work includes a **Pediatric Psychiatry ECHO® for Primary Care** and a **Behavioral Health ECHO® for Schools**. Offering a forum for complex case exploration and recommendations, the curriculum complements

existing offerings of the MPBHP and supports referrals to their consultation services for primary care providers.

Reach out to our team if you're interested in exploring how Project ECHO® may work for you:

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PROJECT SPOTLIGHT:

Pediatric Psychiatry ECHO®

MCD partnered with the Maine CDC Maternal and Child Health Program to launch a monthly Pediatric Psychiatry ECHO® in spring of 2022 for the Maine Pediatric & Behavioral Health Partnership, providing a structured forum for primary care providers and their clinical team members to bring complex pediatric behavioral health cases for review and recommendations.

Leveraging the abilities of participating organizations and their real-world case study examples, MCD assembled a panel of pediatric behavioral health specialists, developed a curriculum relevant to the challenges that primary care providers face, and discussed recommendations and resources around complex behavioral health cases in dynamic settings.

Participation by providers across the state grew from 28 participants in 2022, to 45 pediatricians, family medicine physicians, nurses, and nurse practitioners in 2023.

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I always learn so much from the case presentation and discussion that follows. The case discussed highlighted so many complex social factors impacting a teen's well-being and how they show up in our office. It was a good reminder that, as PCPs, we are not alone in their care and that there are resources we can connect with for support.

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- Participant,
Maine Pediatric Psychiatry ECHO®

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT:

Behavioral Health ECHO® for Schools

Encouraged by the collaborative nature of the ECHO® process, its flexibility, and the critical need for solutions to meet the mental health crisis in Maine's schools, the Maine CDC invited MCD's team to implement a four-part ECHO® for school-based health centers in 2022. Bringing on new collaborators, MCD worked with the Maine Pediatric & Behavioral Health Partnership and the National Alliance on Mental Illness' Maine Chapter to 1) create a curriculum that focused on mental health screenings for all students and best practices in suicide prevention, and 2) facilitate a structured virtual learning environment and forum for those working with students in Maine schools to bring forward complicated behavioral health cases to colleagues and a panel of subject matter experts for review and recommendations.

This ECHO® was such a success that it has been expanded to a full six-month cohort – “Mental Health Promotion in the School Setting,” engaging more than 120 educators, ed techs, school nurses, social workers, counselors, administrators, and others in over 60 schools across the state.

“

I really liked the format. Hear from the teachers first, then the [health care] professionals. Teachers see kids in a different setting than [health care] professionals, and this lens is critical for surviving the day to day.

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- Participant, Maine Behavioral Health ECHO® for Schools

Collaborative for Advancing Rural Excellence & Equity (CARE²)

MCD's CARE² initiative offers a variety of Project ECHO® programs around use of telehealth and tele-enabled learning and support modalities to improve care for underserved and rural residents of **Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and northern New York**. One of these is MCD's **Project ECHO® on Aging, Community, and Equity (PEACE)**. The PEACE ECHO® sessions are person-centered learning communities and engage stakeholders from diverse backgrounds, reinforcing the need for collaboration and coordination. In 2022, the PEACE ECHO® focused on pandemic-related health and behavioral health issues, connecting experts from across the region to tackle topics such as cognitive decline, dementia, depression, and isolation of older adults during COVID-19.

Rural Behavioral Health Workforce Center

Supporting a network of partners working to develop Maine's behavioral health workforce, this project utilizes MCD Project ECHO® programming and peer-to-peer learning with new and established behavioral health professionals, including learning opportunities in partnership with the Co-Occurring Collaborative Serving Maine.

The Northeast Telehealth Resource Center (NETRC)

As the regional telehealth resource center, the NETRC has supported many Project ECHO® programs to engage stakeholders in telehealth improvement efforts across New England and New York.

From 2017-2020, the NETRC served on the advisory group and as an evaluator for the **Northern New England Network Project ECHO®**, along with Quality Counts and partners throughout the region. In this role, MCD assisted in developing, recruiting faculty and SMEs for, and assisting with the technical aspects of conducting multiple ECHO® programs utilized by hundreds of health clinics and providers across Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

In 2020, the NETRC team served as SMEs and technical advisors on several Project ECHOs focused on rapid implementation of telehealth. These included the **New England Expanded Telehealth Services for COVID-19 regional Project ECHO®** hosted by Health Centric Advisors, the Quality Improvement Organization for New England, focused on helping practices quickly get up to speed on new rules and flexibilities under the COVID Public Health Emergency (PHE). The NETRC served as an SME for all six sessions, which included an average of 75 participants each week.



MCD Global Health (MCD) has a long and successful history of working at the state, regional, national, and international levels to increase the effectiveness of health care and public health systems. Our mission: To improve the health and well-being of all people. For 57 years, MCD has provided planning, implementation, training, and technical assistance for public health programs in the U.S. and around the world. Focus areas include **e-Learning Solutions, Strengthening Health Systems, Workforce Development, Wellness Programming**, and more. We're known for being a collaborative, hands-on, and long-term partner, and are often tapped to serve as neutral conveners and facilitators of important work that requires effective collaboration among diverse stakeholders.