

ECHO creates VALUE for all parts of the healthcare system

It is very important to not simplify this to Return on Investment (ROI) equation, but rather as a VALUE EQUATION. ECHO may deliver ROI, but it has a much greater value impact on all segments of the health care system.

ECHO creates value for Patients

- Less travel, saves money
- Less travel, less impact on family and work life
- If undocumented, may avoid interception on US highways (back roads always take much longer)
- Patient gets care from a provider they know and trust
- More direct route to “right care, right place, right time” creates improved outcomes, improved quality of life, reduced pain and anxiety, reduced downstream complications
- Few visits to specialists saves co-pay and insurance fees

ECHO creates value for the Community

- Healthcare dollars spend in the community, not elsewhere
- Reduced impact on workforce, days missed, etc.
- Sense that a community is less isolated and “can take care of its own people and its own problems using its own resources.”
- Ability to provide specialty care in a small town attracts businesses, doctors, etc.
- Reduced turnover at clinic is a powerful stabilizing force for a community

ECHO creates value for the Community Clinic

- Cost: must protect the provider's time each week for dedicated ECHO learning – this comes with reduced RVUs.
- Clinic now has an in-house specialist (or a few who can refer to one another), which allows them to provide specialty care they couldn't otherwise offer, and bill for this care.
- Patients are kept local (when appropriate), avoiding the risk of being referred to other facilities (and not coming back). Patients on the rolls have financial benefits.
- Patients that are more satisfied with care refer their friends to the clinic.
- Patient satisfaction and Patient outcomes both improve – and these are critical metrics for hedis and other oversight agencies and systems.
- Clinician satisfaction and engagement creates a happier, more productive workforce and environment.
- Clinicians engaged in ongoing learning are less isolated, less likely to leave (or turnover as quickly). Clinician turnover is very expensive and destabilizing for a clinic, resulting in paying for locums tenems, recruiting fees, moving fees, training costs, etc. (often estimated at \$150k or more per departing clinician).

ECHO creates value for the Engaged Provider (spoke)

- CME credit for free, without travel costs or inconvenience
- MOC, advanced certificates and other “add-on” benefits are sometimes available
- Learning is ongoing, relevant and interactive – much less boring than traditional webinars or conferences.
- Intention and design is to make each participant more comfortable and more expert – not just pass on information. Feels like the process is “worth the time.”
- Opportunities to engage in community-based research.
- Personally engaging and fun – social network.
- Professional development – new skills and opportunities can contribute to growing responsibility and job prospects.
- Ability to take care of patients more effectively – better knowledge, skills and the “specialists on speed dial” for quick consult when needed.

ECHO creates value for the Center of Excellence (hub)

- Grant and contract opportunities with federal agencies, state agencies and organizations, international organizations, etc.
- Effective triage of resources – enables delivery on current contracts, grants and other responsibilities and deliverables with greater impact and efficient use of money (sometimes money is saved).
- Efficient triage of resources – specialists currently have long wait lines, and high no-show rates, lots of patients not-prepared for the visit (labs, x-rays, other prep completed and compiled) or are in the wrong line for the wrong specialist. When 60-80% of the patients are triaged safely and effectively to the community, the wait time for the remaining complex and critical patients is greatly reduced, as is the no-show rate and the number of people in the wrong line or unprepared. Specialists provide the most complex services, and are able to bill more effectively.
- Specialist engagement improves, as mentoring and sharing are highly energizing and rewarding for hub team members.
- Publications, publicity and high-profile opportunities highlight what the university is doing for the community – good for reputation (with public and legislators).
- Faculty development – ECHO creates opportunities for research, teaching and professional development across faculties. Interprofessional engagement and cross-pollination also improve.

ECHO creates value for the System (payers)

- Reduced waste: fewer unnecessary tests, less travel (subsidized), fewer visits paid for.
- Reduced hospitalization, ED visits. Increased pharmacy costs.
- Improved prevention, health and outcomes for patients reduces downstream interventions: heart attacks, dialysis, amputations, blindness, cancer, disability, addiction, etc.
- Higher patient function reduces Medicaid and Medicare and disability payments