

2021 NPCR GEORGIA SUCCESS STORY

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Use Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes (ECHO) Platform to Improve Training During COVID-19

National Program of Cancer Registries SUCCESS STORY

SUMMARY

In 2021, the Georgia Cancer Registry (GCR) used the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) ECHO platform to conduct virtual training. Georgia Cancer Registry ECHO provided successful means for Georgia cancer registrars to share cases and discuss coding issues securely. In addition, bi-monthly discussion reduced the feeling of disconnect between the GCR staff and Georgia hospital registrars.

CHALLENGE

In 2020 and during the pandemic, the GCR staff found it difficult to maintain communication with the hospitals. As a result, cancer reporting completeness and timeliness dropped significantly. At the same time, GCR staff received a directive from the DPH Commissioner and Health Officer not to enforce any policies or regulations that could harm Georgia hospitals.

SOLUTION

Considering the pandemic and the DPH Commissioner and Health Officer communications, the GCR partnered with the Georgia DPH Project ECHO- Moving Knowledge (unm.edu), led by the Georgia office of Telehealth, Telemedicine, and Rural Health Initiatives. This office has a license from the University of New Mexico to establish and host ECHO spokes. GCR applied and received approval to conduct training every other month and provide Continuing Education Units (CEU) to cancer registrars when they participate in the live sessions. DPH ECHO staff provided technical assistance and maintained a list of registered and participating members of the Cancer Registry ECHO. Additionally, DPH ECHO staff documented the duration of each attendee's participation so that GCR could evaluate participants with the quality of abstraction.

RESULTS

GCR, in partnership with DPH ECHO staff, hosted 6 Cancer Registry ECHOs. Hospitals' participants in the ECHO ranged between 60-100, with one planning ECHO hosted in August 2021. The planning ECHO was used to evaluate hospitals' satisfaction with the platform and willingness to participate in the 2022 Cancer Registry ECHO. Although the response was overwhelmingly positive, hospital registrars requested to increase the length from 60 minutes to 90 minutes. As a result, hospitals registrars volunteered to facilitate ECHO sessions. For example, they suggested having a physician speaker from their hospitals and sharing cases with abstracting and coding challenges for training purposes. Finally, they wanted more frequent ECHOs (monthly vs. every other month) and requested topics related to cancer registry operations in addition to registry data entry challenges.

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

GCR staff will maintain the Cancer Registry ECHO in 2022. Once the state authorizes travel, GCR plans to maintain these sessions as cancer registrars agree that the ECHO platform has been useful in continuing education, enhancing abstracting skills, and reducing travel costs to the hospitals and the GCR staff. GCR currently does not provide funds to the Office of Telehealth, Telemedicine, and Rural Health Initiatives. However, Cancer Registry ECHO adds a needed expansion to the program.

REGISTRY CONTACT INFORMATION

404-657-2588

<https://dph.georgia.gov/chronic-disease-prevention/georgia-comprehensive-cancer-registry>



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