

## Project ECHO LeadingAge/AHCA Call

September 29, 2020

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This afternoon, we participated in a call with LeadingAge and AHCA state executives to discuss a new initiative between the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), University of New Mexico's ECHO Institute in Albuquerque and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) in Boston. This partnership will establish a [National Nursing Home COVID Action Network](#), that will provide free training and mentorship to nursing homes across the country to increase the implementation of evidence-based infection prevention and safety practices to protect residents and staff. Below are some questions and answers about the program. ***We encourage all members with nursing home settings to take advantage of this opportunity.***

**What is the goal of this program?** The purpose of the project is to create a virtual learning community to provide a no cost training and mentoring program to help nursing homes implement best practices. This is not about telling people what to do, but guided practice and mentorship. There are small, intimate network of homes, who can learn from each other. The program aims to:

- Save lives
- Keep virus out of facilities
- Identify residents and staff quickly when they are infected
- Appropriately triage and hospitalize those who need care
- Ensure staff practice safety measures to protect residents, and themselves
- Reduce social isolation for families, residents, and staff

**How long is the program?** 16-week training program, with weekly sessions.

**Who should participate?** Any facility that is licensed as a nursing home is eligible to participate.

**Who is the optimal team of participants from a nursing home?** optimal participation nursing home team would be: DON, Med director, admin, CNA, with some flexibility. We understand that not all will always be available.

**What is the time commitment?** To fully participate, 3 staff members must attend 13 of 16 meetings. Upon completion, nursing homes will receive \$6,000 stipend, which is meant to help reimburse for staff time.

**What will be covered in the 16 weeks?** More information will be available soon. We know that the program will be facilitated by an interdisciplinary team of experts, including presentation and case discussions. The program allows nursing homes to have access to local and national experts in operations, infection prevention and control, and more. Many of the teachers will be experts in nursing homes – not just hospitals.

**What happens after the 16 weeks?** After the 16 weeks, nursing homes can participate in an additional 36 weeks to help implement everything they have learned.

**How do we sign up?** Visit this webpage to learn more or sign up: <https://hsc.unm.edu/echo/nursing-home/>. The goal is to have facilities sign up by November.

**Will we be audited on the use of the stipend? Is HHS going to come back and will providers need to audit?** No, there is no auditing. This is specific to compensating nursing homes to participate in this active learning community. The \$6,000 can be used any way they would like. It is intended to cover the cost of the 3 staff members attending 16 weeks of weekly sessions.

**What is the differentiator in this program? Why should we participate?** This program will support nursing homes in moving from understanding guidance, to reliable and effective implementation. Nursing homes will have ongoing mentorship and support to apply and learn in an active way. We anticipate that nursing homes will have better workflow, will save time, and employees will experience enhance joy in work. We hope to reduce turnover as well.

**When will first classes start? Is everyone in the country starting at the same time? Or some starting sooner than others?** We expect training centers to begin launching within 1-2 weeks of signing contracts. We expect some programs to start launching within two weeks.

**How will effectiveness be measured?** We are measuring reach (how many and which nursing homes participated), implementation (how many sessions, participation rates, topics covered, etc.), feedback (how useful were the curriculum, tools, sessions), and outcomes (especially resident COVID rates).

*Sanjeev Arora, Director of the ECHO Institute – ECHO will be coordinating and facilitating HUBs across the country to begin hosting these learning sessions.*

*Dr. Kedar Mate – President and CEO of Institute for Healthcare Improvement, and Age Friendly Communities – IHI is developing the curriculum for this program.*