

# North Carolina Family Support ECHO™

*Amplifying the Connections Between Partners and  
Resources Vital to Whole-Person Care*

Today you'll learn about-

Core elements of the ECHO model.

How the NC Family Support ECHO program was developed, implemented, and evaluated.

The critical need for family support and opportunities to advance family support within your organization, community and our state.

# Timeline

- ▶ Conversations around what is needed in North Carolina, given current and future landscape.
- ▶ Wyoming Project ECHO presentation at May 2018 Summit that prompted discussion about the need for and practicality of Family Support ECHO in NC
- ▶ Deciding on two organizations to spearhead a collective effort (and securing funding support for pilot program from NC DHHS).
- ▶ Deciding who should take the lead within those organizations.
- ▶ Gathering a team from other partner organizations with shared mission.
- ▶ Honing our focus: using ECHO to provide direct education and support to families, OR building a corps who provides that service and enhance their skills and connections

# NC Family Support ECHO

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## Organizational Partners

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Family Support Network™ of WNC



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NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

# Why Family Support?

- ▶ What we know:
  - ▶ Parents, siblings are often lifelong caregivers.
  - ▶ Primary caregivers are asking for support.
  - ▶ Keeping these families supported puts less strain on multiple systems.
  - ▶ Medicaid transformation and whole-person care on horizon.

# Who Provides Family Support?

- ▶ Professionals and volunteers with or without lived experience.
- ▶ Many different titles: Family Partners, Practice Navigators, Family Navigators, Resource Specialists, Community Guides, Case Managers, Clinical Caseworkers, and Community Health Workers.
- ▶ Limited contact with peers.
- ▶ Rural communities face additional challenges.

# A NC Family Support Initiative: Where and Who?

## Planning Team

\***Kim Tizzard**, Autism Society of North Carolina

\***Melinda Plue**, The Arc of North Carolina

\*Julie Davis, VAYA Health

\*Kerri Eaker, Family Support Network of WNC, Mission Children's Hospital

\*Katie Holler, TEACCH

\*Lisa Sullivan, First in Families NC

Karen Luken, Disability and Health Consultant

Dr. Gary Walby, External Evaluator

# What is Project ECHO™?

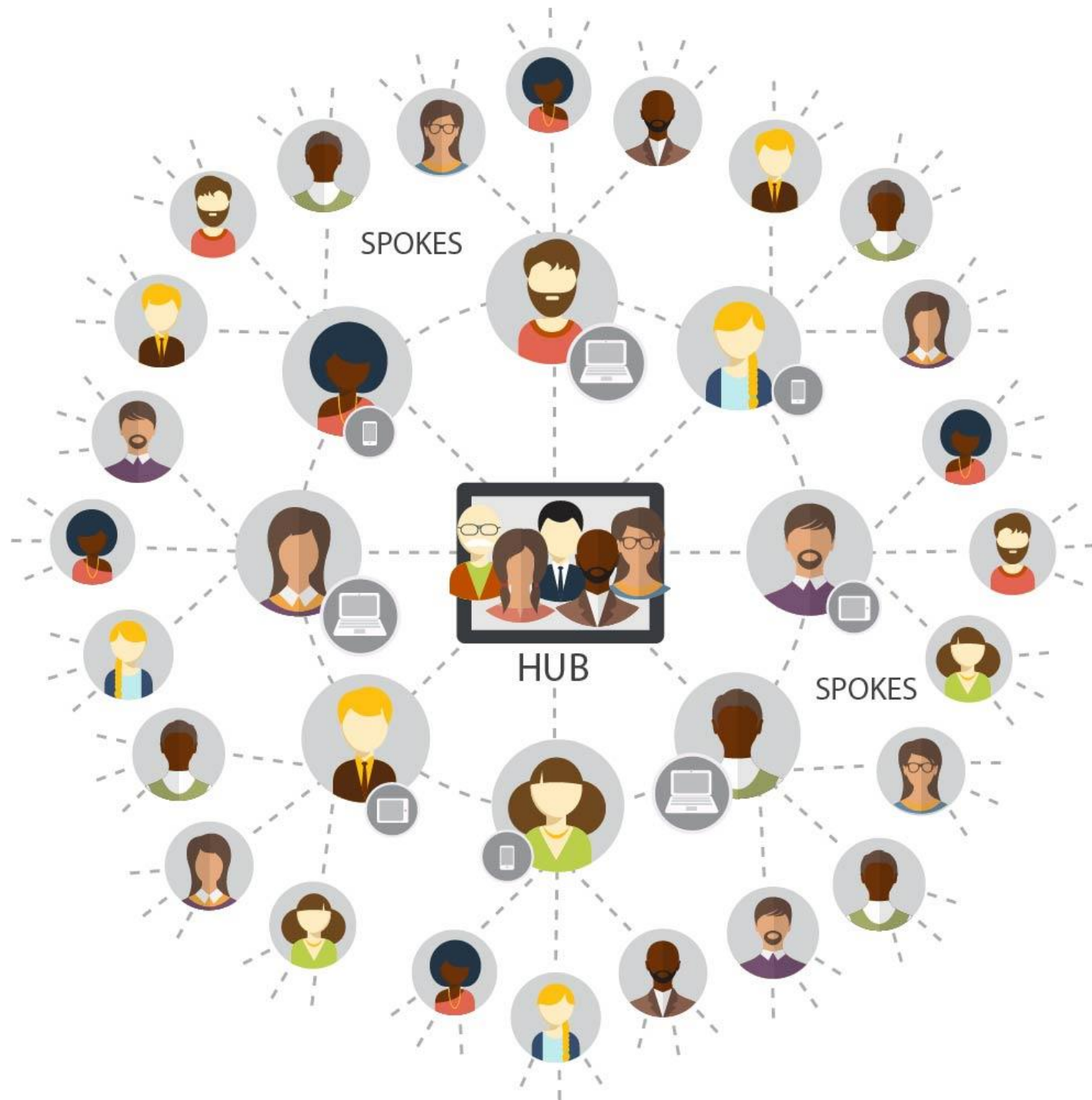


- ▶ Guided practice model.
- ▶ Engages participants (SPOKES) via video conference.
- ▶ Connects participants to specialist mentors (HUB).
- ▶ Hub team members serve as teachers and mentors.
- ▶ Through tele-mentoring, ECHO™ creates access to local resources.
- ▶ ***ALL TEACH-ALL LEARN.***



# What is Project ECHO?





# Principles of the ECHO™ model: ABCD

Amplification (use technology to leverage scarce resources)

Best practices (to reduce disparity)

Case-based learning (to master complexity)

Data (to monitor outcomes)

# Becoming NC Family Support ECHO

## The Hub Team

- ❖ **Kim Tizzard**, Co-Facilitator, NC Family Support ECHO™
- ❖ **Melinda Plue**, Co-Facilitator, NC Family Support ECHO™
  
- ❖ **Julie Davis**
  - Family Partner, VAYA Health
- ❖ **Kerri Eaker**
  - Education Outreach Coordinator, FSN of WNC, Mission Children's Hospital
- ❖ **Michael LePage**
  - Western Regional Director, Autism Society of North Carolina
- ❖ **Duncan Reid**
  - Regional Director, The Arc of North Carolina

## Hub Support Staff:

- Elena Lamarche, Coordinator/Administrator
- Andre Perkins, IT Specialist, The Arc of North Carolina

# Our Spokes Team

## ❖ Recruitment of Spokes

## ❖ Incentives

### ▶ Cross-segment of community:

- ▶ Exceptional Children's Assistance Center, HCA Healthcare, Vaya Health, TEACCH, Community Care of NC, Pathways, McDowell Pediatrics, Youth Villages
- ▶ Ended up with a total of 9 spokes after recruitment.
- ▶ Represented 15 counties in Western NC - not just Buncombe.

# Setup of an ECHO session



# Anatomy of an ECHO session

## Part One: Brief Didactic

20-30 minutes, tops

## Part Two: Family Presentation Review

1-2 per session, depending on complexity

- Prescriptive way to manage these sessions (facilitator role is critical)
  - Allows both Hub Team and Spokes to ask questions and share recommendations.
  - Each session followed with notes and recommendations for entire team.
  - Total time for an ECHO session was 90 minutes.

# Didactic presentation topics covered in this Family Support ECHO pilot:

Housing Overview and Opportunities in WNC

Medicaid and How to Access Services

Guardianship, Alternatives to Guardianship, and Supported Decision-Making\*  
Self-Advocacy\*

Health and Wellness\*

The Basics of SSI & SSDI

The Basics of an IEP

ABLE Accounts\*

Know Your WNC Resources

Self-Care



# Team Participation for Pilot

## ▶ Nine Spokes members

- ❖ One attended all sessions
- ❖ Six attended 8-9 sessions
- ❖ Two attended 4 sessions
  - (COVID-19 forced 2 out)

## ▶ Six Hub Team members

- ❖ Four attended all sessions
- ❖ Two attended 8-9 sessions

# Evaluation Findings:

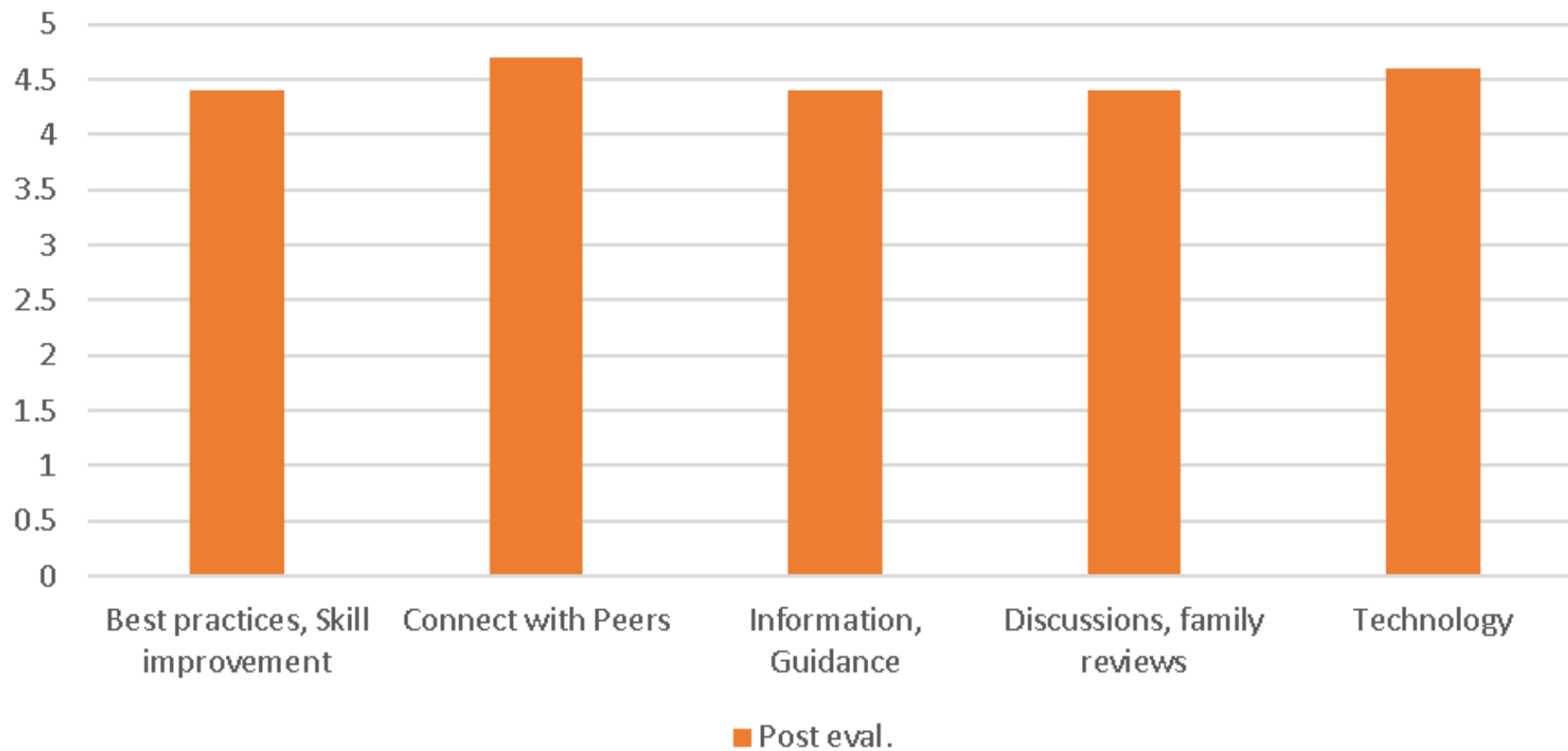
The following items showed the most improvement:

Ability to...

- ▶ Answer family questions about I/DD (including ASD) and know how to link them to the best resource.
- ▶ Connect a family to the LME/MCO for enrollment in services.
- ▶ Discuss the educational system and EC process with families.

## Satisfaction Surveys

1 = strongly disagree 5 = strongly agree



“It’s allowed me to take a more 30,000-foot view of supporting a family instead of diving right into what their particular issues are.”

“Listening to the questions that were asked in the family presentation is allowing me to help frame how I support families in my work.”

“ ..realizing that everybody had something to offer even in their questions. It really became like a safe haven for people to have those transparent, vulnerable conversations.”

“ A new role for me and a totally new area. I was able to hear organic conversations about real people during the family presentations and the resources for them. There was a lot of stuff I wasn’t aware of. A lot of little stuff that wouldn’t be easy to find online or wouldn’t be obvious.”

“I was really surprised to see the resiliency of the people who have been doing this for years, that are still passionate, that are still trying, that are still helping, supporting and doing as much as they can.”

# Things We Learned Along the Way

- ▶ Pick the right topic for you.
- ▶ Pick the right champions and facilitators.
- ▶ Always focus on the needs of the learners and participants.
- ▶ Stay organized and follow up afterwards with notes/recommendations.
- ▶ Stay true to the fidelity of the model as much as possible.

## After the Pilot:

- ▶ With the goal of expanding Family Support ECHO across the state and ensuring a regional focus:
  - ▶ WNC Family Support ECHO launched in October 2020.
  - ▶ Central/Triad Family Support ECHO launched in February 2021.

## After the Pilot:

- ▶ Western NC Family Support ECHO 2.0
  - ▶ 8 sessions
  - ▶ 12 new spokes
  - ▶ 2 former spokes became hub team members
  - ▶ Covered 22 WNC counties
  - ▶ Didactic topics varied from pilot
  - ▶ Julie/Kerri served as co-facilitators

## After the Pilot:

- ▶ Central/Triad NC Family Support ECHO 2.0
  - ▶ 8 sessions, February-May 2021
  - ▶ 13 spokes
  - ▶ Didactic topics based on survey results
  - ▶ Kim/Melinda served as co-facilitators



# Policy Implications and Opportunities for North Carolina

Three central aims of Medicaid Transformation:

- (1) better care delivery;
- (2) healthier people, healthier communities;
- (3) smarter spending.

# Policy Implications and Opportunities for North Carolina (continued)

- ▶ Alignment with Medicaid Transformation, as outlined in the previous slide.
- ▶ Importance of technology-based and virtual learning and collaboration in today's world.
- ▶ Recommendations across payors and health and human service systems.
- ▶ ECHO is growing and we want to make sure I/DD is intentionally included and represented.

# Resource List

- ▶ Project ECHO: <https://hsc.unm.edu/echo/about-us/>
  - ▶ <https://hsc.unm.edu/echo/>
- ▶ I/DD Medical Health Home Initiative (summary report on NC Family Support ECHO pilot ) <http://iddhealthhomeinitiativenc.com/index.php>

## Contacts:

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# Questions?