

March 2017

Special points of interest:

- Project ECHO
- Member Highlight: Bill Lewis, MD
- New River Regional Health Alliance

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### Project ECHO Chronic Pain

The West Virginia Clinical and Translational Science Institute has recently expanded its Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes (ECHO) program. The newly expanded program adds sessions focusing on the treatment of patients with chronic pain.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, West Virginia continues to have the highest rate of drug overdose deaths along with the third highest opioid prescription rate in the

nation. These statistics are both key factors in the opioid epidemic currently devastating the state and an indication that the way chronic pain patients are treated needs to change.

“ECHO programs are an important strategy to amplify community provider knowledge,” said Sally Hodder, M.D., WVCTSI director. “This program will augment provider knowledge around chronic pain management and is a great example of how WVCTSI is responding to one of the



most important issues currently facing our state.”

This collaborative project between WVCTSI, the West Virginia Primary Care Association (WVPCA), and Project ECHO utilizes a hub and spoke knowledge sharing network that connects rural healthcare providers seeking advice on chronic pain cases with experts at West Virginia University. Sessions are

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### The New Look: Newsletter

The WVPBRN is pleased to introduce you to the newest version of the newsletter. Beginning in 2017, the network will release quarterly newsletters in this updated format. This new style provides opportunities for in depth articles and the space to highlight network activities, individual members, and partners.

Please keep us up-to-date on the activities going on in your site and organization and

we will work to feature them in this newsletter.

This new edition will continue to provide expanded opportunities to highlight the impact made in different communities around the state. In addition to projects, we are excited to spotlight members that are passionate about their work and are great examples of clinical and community partners.



*The mission of the WVPBRN is to improve the health of West Virginians by collaborating with primary care practices to conduct translational practice-based research.*



## WVPBRN 4th Annual Retreat

The WVPBRN will be holding its 4th annual Retreat at Stonewall Resort in Roanoke, West Virginia on April 6 & 7, 2017. The retreat will begin with a dinner gathering on the evening of April 6, featuring a networking dinner

Retreat sessions will be held on Friday, April 7th. The agenda will focus on Network updates and leadership transition, partnership building, patient engagement strategies in research, network-wide project ideas, and a poster

session to highlight current projects.

If you have any questions, please contact Stacey Whanger, WVPBRN Manager, [swhanger@hsc.wvu.edu](mailto:swhanger@hsc.wvu.edu) Jay Mason, Program Coordinator at [jdmason@hsc.wvu.edu](mailto:jdmason@hsc.wvu.edu).



## Project ECHO Chronic Pain (cont'd)

held twice a month via videoconference and provide rural healthcare providers an opportunity to present cases and participate in didactics covering a variety of chronic pain topics.

“ECHO is a great example of technology being used to change the way we care for patients,” said Jennifer Boyd, PA-C, director of clinical quality with the WVPCA and ECHO participant. “All clinicians need is an Internet connection and webcam and they expand their knowledge of treatment for the patients they would normally have to refer away. The telementoring expands the knowledge base on a variety of health topics, sharing expertise from specialists to primary care providers throughout the state.”

The WV Project ECHO program was initiated in May 2016 with the chronic hepatitis C ECHO that seeks to amplify community provider knowledge regarding hepatitis C diagnosis and management. Since the inception of the

hepatitis C ECHO program, 15 clinics from West Virginia and Ohio have presented 48 unique hepatitis C cases and participated in 17 educational presentations.

“We’ve had a lot of success with our hepatitis C ECHO,” said Jay Mason, WVCTSI Project ECHO coordinator. “It was through those interactions with ECHO participants that we learned that there was a real desire to expand the WV Project ECHO to include the treatment of chronic pain.”

The ECHO platform, which originated at the University of New Mexico, is currently being used worldwide to address various health needs. In November 2016 the U.S. Senate unanimously passed the ECHO act that authorizes the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to study the Project ECHO model.

For more information on how to participate in Project ECHO, contact Jay Mason [jdmason@hsc.wvu.edu](mailto:jdmason@hsc.wvu.edu).

### WVPBRN Member Highlight: Bill Lewis, MD

Bill Lewis, MD, has been a member of the WVPBRN since 2013. He serves as Associate Professor in WVU Department of Family Medicine - Eastern Division and a primary care provider at Harpers Ferry Family Medicine. Dr. Lewis works with the Family Medicine residents on practice transformation, quality improvement, and research projects. Before coming to WVU, he worked at EA Hawse, a FQHC in Mathias, WV, for four years.

Bill has participated in

numerous WVPBRN projects over the last three years. He has led several initiatives including the IRIS diabetic eye exam project and the Resident Learning Collaborative.

*"I am very excited for the opportunity to co-direct the WVPBRN. I believe the Network provides a voice for West Virginia in clinical research and offers an opportunity to improve health outcomes in patients," Dr. Lewis states. "The establishment and growth of the WVPBRN has made a significant*

*impact in health outcomes of West Virginia."*

Bill has served as chair of the WVPBRN Protocol Review Committee and will assume the role of co-director of the in July.



*"Rural healthcare providers working in community health clinics are the key to improving the health and healthcare of West Virginia"*

*-Arnie Hassen, PhD*

### New River Gorge Regional Health Alliance

The first meeting of the newly formed New River Gorge Regional Health Alliance took place January 31, 2017 at the Tamarack, in Beckley, W.Va. Stakeholders from the New River Gorge area, including Fayette, Raleigh, Summers, and Nicholas Counties, participated in a full day event to kick-off the effort.

Melanie Seiler, Active Southern West Virginia, began to think about a regional health approach to improving health during the WVCTSI community forum last August. Melanie partnered with the New River Gorge Regional Development Authority, WVU Extension, United Way of Southern W.Va, and local health departments to bring a diverse group of stakeholders together to discuss ways to utilize and share resources throughout the region.

The group is planning to meet again in April to further discussions on the group's mission and vision toward addressing health needs throughout the region.





**WVPBRN**

West Virginia  
Practice-Based Research Network

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West Virginia Practice-Based Research Network



## Announcements

We are pleased to welcome Andrew Denny, MPH to the WVPBRN support staff. Andrew began working with the WVCTSI at the beginning of 2016 and has joined the WVPBRN to help support the growing efforts.