Impact of Extension for Community Health Outcomes Model for HIV Training in Midwestern Non-Metropolitan Areas

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BACKGROUND

- In 2021, HIV diagnoses in rural areas nearly doubled, accounting for 35% of Nebraska's new cases.
- Average CD4+ T cell counts at diagnosis were lower in rural areas compared to urban areas (378 vs. 953 cells/mm^3)
- Rural Nebraska healthcare providers report less access to HIV education and training.
- The UNMC HIV Extension for Community Health Outcomes (ECHO) equipped rural providers with the expertise needed to manage the complexities of HIV care.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

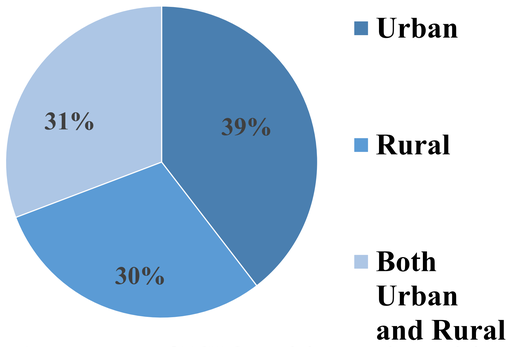


Figure 1. Percentage of ECHO participants who work in each geographic area within Nebraska.

METHODS

- HIV healthcare providers participated in the HIV ECHO Program: 14 virtual educational sessions on various aspects of HIV care.*
- Participants were then surveyed post ECHO completion in topics surrounding comfort in managing HIV and barriers to care and further educational needs.
- Data were analyzed using Fisher's exact test or Chi-square analysis.

*Not all participants attended all sessions.

PROJECT AIMS

Aim #1: Define barriers to providing effective comprehensive HIV care in the urban and rural clinical setting across the state of Nebraska.

Aim #2: Improve the knowledge, confidence, and clinical skills among HIV providers

Aim #3: Identify ongoing educational needs of the HIV workforce to guide further ECHO models.

IMPROVED COMFORT WITH HIV CARE TOPICS

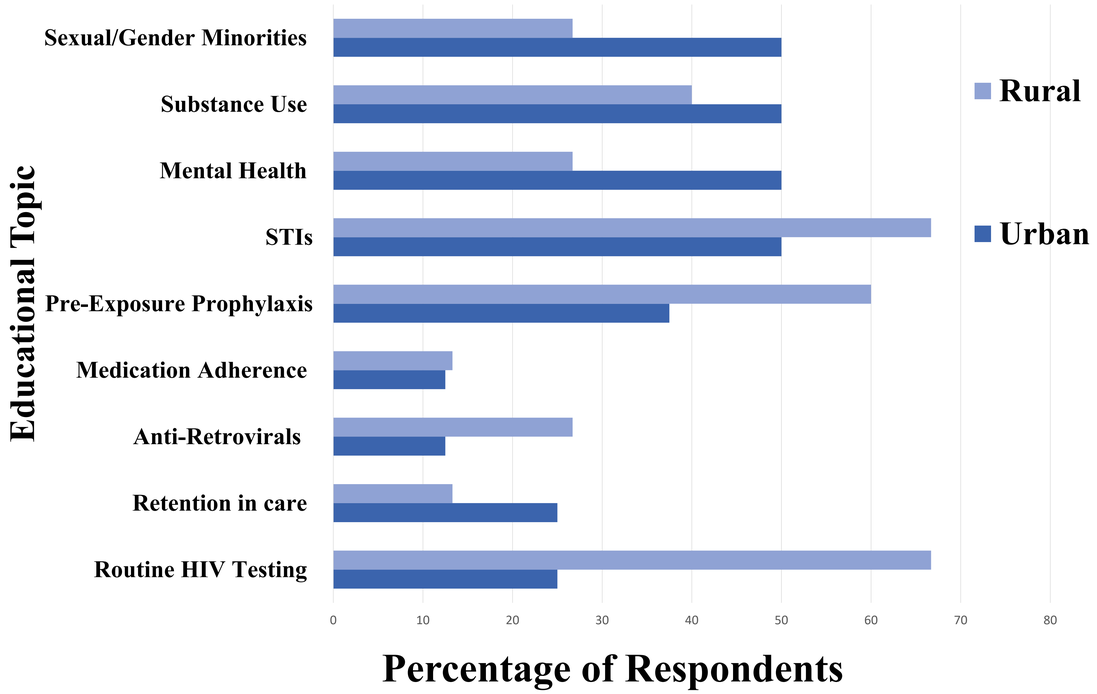


Figure 2. Percentage of Survey Respondents who reported increased comfort in the following educational topics.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- ECHO model has decreased barriers for accessing HIV care education to rural providers.
- The ECHO model can be extrapolated for further educational needs
- Recurring surveys will be necessary to determine knowledge retention and provide updates to care recommendations.

BARRIERS TO HIV TRAINING

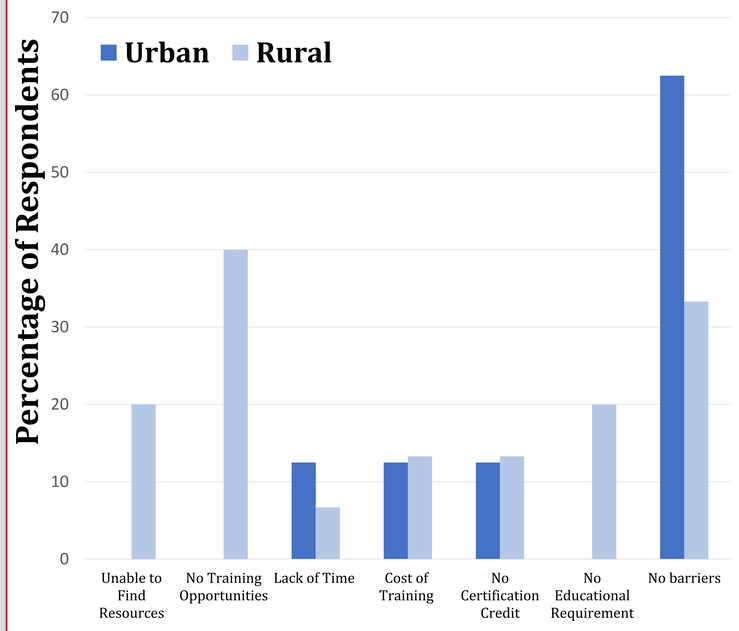


Figure 3. Barriers to HIV training identified by respondents at the conclusion of the HIV ECHO sessions.

RESULTS

The HIV ECHO demonstrates an effective format to deliver education on HIV care topics improving provider comfort across many aspects of comprehensive care.

- **Rural providers reported improvement in:**
  - Routine HIV testing (67%)*
  - STI testing (67%)*
  - PrEP (60%)*

* all higher than urban respondents

CONCLUSIONS

- Rural participants have greater ongoing educational needs in: STIs & Oral health.
- Further educational needs on racial and ethnic minorities, Substance abuse, and Mental health complications.
- No statistically significant barriers to care identified between urban and rural providers.