



Exemplar Project

Behavioral and Mental Health

This document summarizes an exemplary quality improvement project that was submitted to the American Board of Pediatrics and earned the participants 25 points of MOC Part 4 Credit.

ECHO Autism: Improving Access to Autism Diagnosis

- **Location:** University of Missouri
- **Submitting Physician:** Kristin Sohl, MD
- **Key Takeaway:** Resources for families and health professionals, including virtual meetings, are centralized online at echoautism.org

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

Improve developmental and autism screening rates in primary care through a combination of ECHO (Extension of Healthcare Outcomes) Autism framework and quality improvement methodology. Join a subspecialist team to be mentored through your own practice's case and coached to maximize screening and identification of autism.

WHAT PROBLEM DID THE PROJECT ADDRESS?

Currently, children wait up to 18 months to be evaluated for a question of autism in Missouri. The average across the country is reported to be between nine and 12 months. This quality improvement effort seeks to increase screening and then primary care provider diagnosis of children with a question of autism. Currently, primary care providers in Missouri do not make diagnoses of autism and refer all children with this question to a specialty center.

WHAT DID YOUR PROJECT AIM TO ACCOMPLISH?

What Are You Trying to Change? Standardized screening (developmental and autism) at 18- and 24-month well-child checks.

What is Your Improvement Goal? Increase percentage of 18- and 24-month well-child checks with completed developmental and autism screening to 50% of all eligible visits by the end of six months of participation in ECHO Autism Clinic and then increase percentage to 95% by the end of 12 months of ECHO Autism clinic participation.

What Is the Time Frame for This to Be Accomplished? First goal is six months, second goal is 12 months.

MEASURES:

- **Measure Name:** MCHAT completion
- **Measure Type:** Process
- **Measure Calculation:** Self-reported chart review of 18- and 24-month-old children seen in previous 30 days
- **Data Source:** Chart review, survey, EHR
- **Measure Target:** Increase completion to 50% by six months
- **Collection Frequency:** Other



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- **Measure Name:** MCHAT completion
 - **Measure Type:** Process
 - **Measure Calculation:** Review of 18- and 24-month-old children seen in previous 30 days
 - **Data Source:** Chart review, survey, EHR
 - **Measure Target:** Increase completion to 95% by the end of 12 months
 - **Collection Frequency:** Other
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- **Measure Name:** General Developmental Screener (i.e., ASQ)
 - **Measure Type:** Process
 - **Measure Calculation:** Review of 18- and 24-month-old children seen in previous 30 days
 - **Data Source:** Chart review, survey, EHR
 - **Measure Target:** Increase completion to 50% by six months
 - **Collection Frequency:** Other
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- **Measure Name:** Number of children on the waitlist at Autism Center
 - **Measure Type:** Outcome
 - **Measure Calculation:** Number of children on the waitlist at start
 - **Data Source:** Other
 - **Measure Target:** Reduced by 10% from baseline
 - **Collection Frequency:** Quarterly

NOTABLE CHANGE STRATEGIES:

- **Breakthrough Series:** IHI's collaborative model for a short-term (six- to 15-month) learning system that brought together a large number of teams from hospitals or clinics to seek improvement in a focused topic area.
- **Learning Network:** This developed out of the IHI breakthrough series. It allowed for continued collaboration between participants for sharing ideas on making improvements, yielding a significant improvement in screening rates, and contributing to a sense of team accomplishment and provider knowledge.
- **Standardized Screens in Primary Care:** ASD screenings implemented consistently in all 18- and 24-month well-child checks.
- **Website to Resource Families and Health Professionals:** Centralized resources for both families and health professionals on a publicly accessible website.
- **Monthly Reviews/Discussions:** Clinic-review participants review run charts and discuss PDSAs for improvement each month during an ECHO Autism clinic review.
- **Strategically Reconsider Control Charts:** After six months of reviewing run charts and formulating PDSA, strategically changed to control charts to show increased fidelity to the new process and drive toward higher reliability.



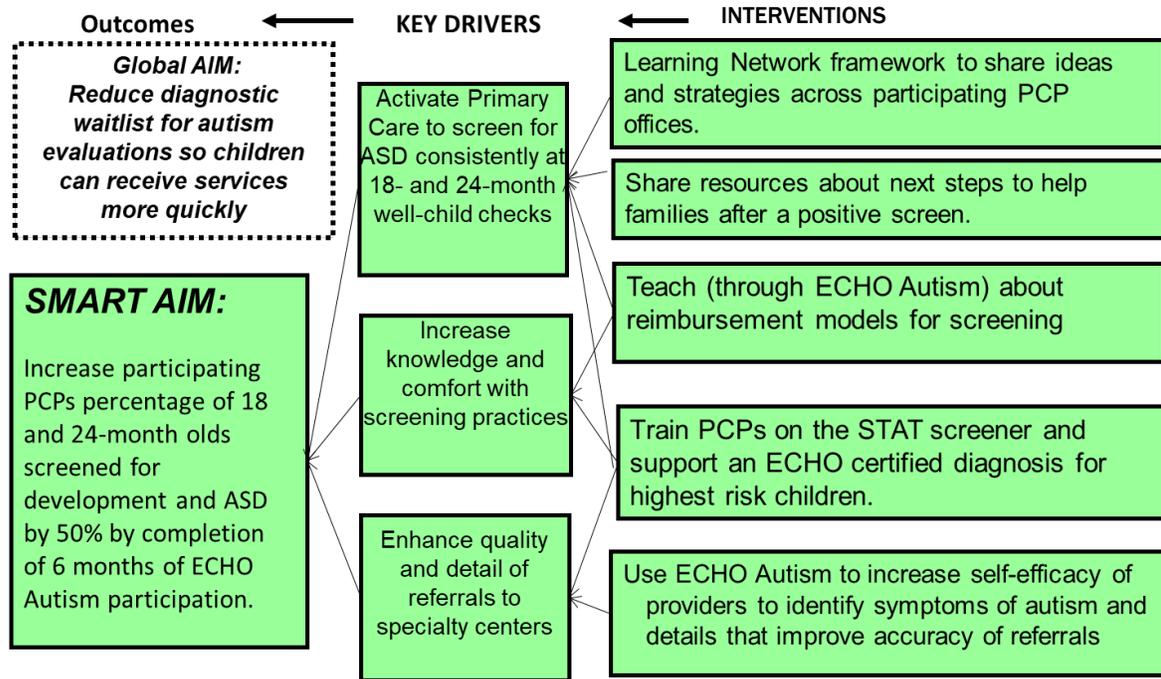
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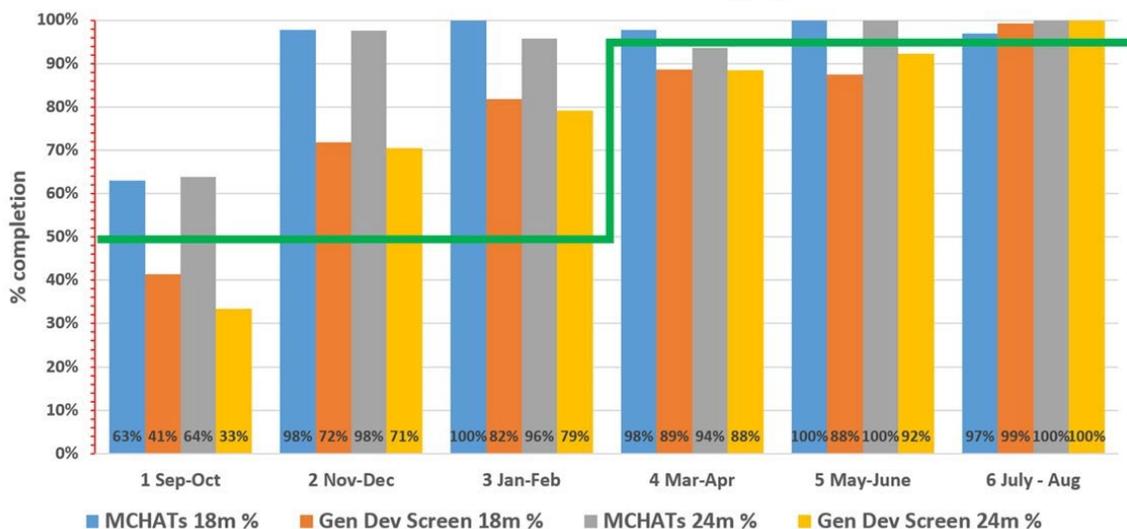
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Key Driver Diagram



DATA:

% Completed Developmental and ASD Screening at 18 and 24 month Well Child Visits over 6 Intervals - Aggregated





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OUTCOME:

To date, the results of ECHO Autism have been very successful. The first cohort that participated (n=15) achieved the goal of 95% completion by the end of 12 months. A learning network developed as part of this MOC module so the participants could share ideas about how to make improvements. This yielded significant improvement in their screening rates and contributed to a sense of team accomplishment.

QUESTIONS?

To learn how to create your own quality improvement project, visit <https://www.abp.org/content/your-own-qi-project> or contact our MOC Support Center at 919-929-0461 or moc@abpeds.org.