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Research Week 202

Health equity peer-to-peer learning for public health professionals

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Keywords

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Abstract

There is swelling recognition that much work remains to address health inequities in America's communities. Local public health agencies (LPHAs) are working to improve their plans, programs, and partnerships to promote health equity, however, particularly in rural areas, lack of training opportunities and resources can make this difficult. Additionally, there is no unified direction for this work and each community's plan must be tailored to local needs. Addressing this need, the Oregon ECHO Network, the Oregon Health & Science-Portland State University, and the Oregon Health Authority hosted a Project ECHO® (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes) program in fall 2023 to increase public health professionals' knowledge, confidence, and skills to address health inequities. Participants included professionals from 18 of Oregon's 36 counties, ranging from epidemiologists, executive leadership, program managers, and more. Virtual lecture topics, which included a didactic and case-based, interactive learning, included the history of racism in Oregon, current health disparities, fostering effective partnerships, principles of data justice and equity in community research, developing equity-centered program plans, and community power building. After the program, 90% of post-program survey respondents indicated the series improved their access to experts in health equity, while 100% said the series enhanced their communication skills about health equity. Evaluations showed that respondent knowledge about health equity topics increased across 100% of measured topics. Connections made during this series have led to continued networking and action by participants. This session will share one promising method for peer-to-peer support of LPHAs to promote health equity in their communities.