**POSTER ABSTRACT**

**Utilising the Project ECHO® model of education to empower health professional in the management of Childhood Overweight and Obesity**

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**Background:** With support from a telementoring education program, a family-based treatment can be safely delivered within the primary care setting for children who are overweight or obese and their families, providing timely access to services, and reducing travel costs.

**Theory:** Childhood obesity is a significant health, economic and social problem in Australia, with one in four children being classified as overweight or obese. Project ECHO® (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes) is a collaborative model of education that provides clinicians with the knowledge they need to manage complex patients locally¹² by linking practitioners to experts through a revolutionary model of telementoring¹² This model aims to support and empower local clinicians' by delivering training contextualized to the local community, empowering clinicians to accept and manage referrals that previously would have been referred on to specialist, non-local services.

**Objectives:** Upskill and empower health care professionals across Queensland to have a better understanding and awareness of childhood overweight and obesity so they can provide more effective local services.  
Evaluate the effectiveness of Project ECHO® to inform future statewide service delivery in childhood overweight or obesity management.

**Theory/Method:** Children’s Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service (CHQHHS) has partnered with the Queensland Child and Health Clinical Network, Preventive Health Branch (Department of Health) and University of Queensland (UQ) designed and delivered the first Childhood Overweight and Obesity ECHO® series in Australia. This continued into three more cycles of the series delivered throughout 2018.

**Implementation includes:** CHQHHS Integrated Care Team completed formal accreditation training with the University of New Mexico to become the first paediatric Project ECHO® hub in the Southern Hemisphere. Team developed and will completed four childhood overweight and obesity ECHO® series – throughout 2018.

Supported by UQ academic team for research and evaluation processes.
Special focus given to support clinicians from regional/remote areas.

Future series will integrate a new statewide referral pathway with implementation evaluation programs to support

**Results:** As at December 2018, 4 x paediatric overweight and obesity ECHO® series were delivered reaching >55 primary health professionals throughout Queensland, northern New South Wales and Northern Territory. This has supported clinicians from regional/remote communities and data regarding changes in knowledge, attitudes, confidence and practicing behaviours have been captured for evaluation. This data is being finalised for dissemination.

Participating health professionals included: Paediatricians, General Practitioners, Clinical Nurses, Allied Health Professionals, Policy Officers.

**Conclusions:** A targeted, relevant and practical health professional educational program significantly improves the ability and confidence of clinicians to provide evidence-based, high quality and sustainable care to support children and families to lead healthier lives.

Clinicians have reported they feel supported and upskilled to best support children and families within their local community in the childhood overweight and obesity prevention and management across the health care continuum.

**Lessons learned:** The panel of experts are learning from clinicians from rural and remote communities on local management and treatment and that prevention and management is not a one size fits all method.

Participants feel empowered to treat childhood overweight and obesity at a local level.

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**Keywords:** childhood; obesity; telementoring; empower project echo®