

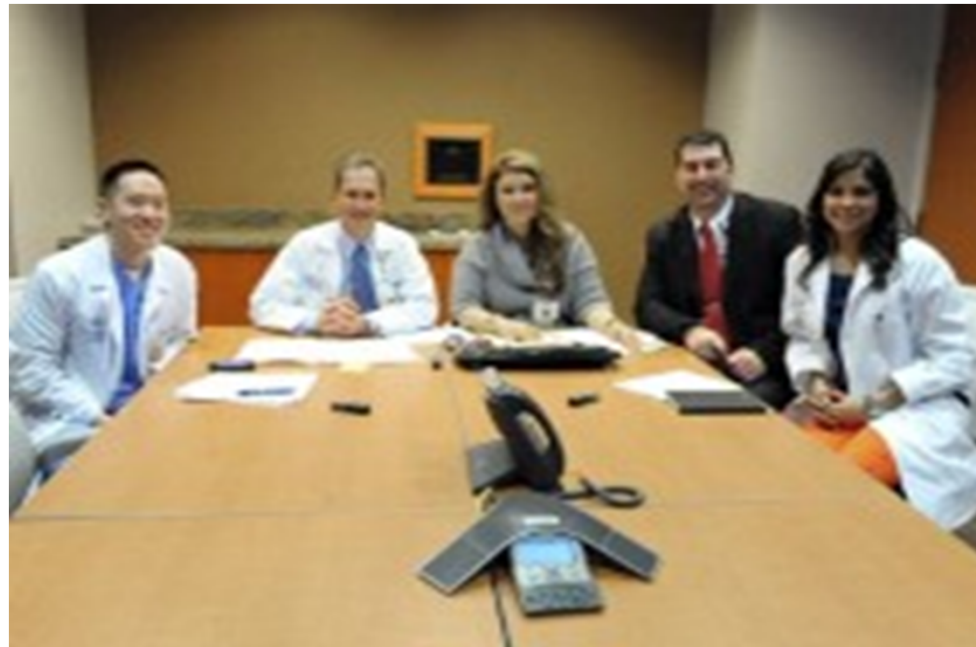
Opportunities
for screening,
care and
treatment for

HCV in a
community
health center
through
primary care

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BSLMC-Project E.C.H.O.

Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center, in Houston, Texas, launched a tele-health program, Project E.C.H.O. (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes) with a team of healthcare professionals, Project E.C.H.O. Medical Director and Hepatologist, Norman Sussman, MD and Project Coordinator, Lizette Escamilla.





METHODS



- Through a partnership with Project E.C.H.O. and St. Luke's, and local Federally Qualified Health Centers, primary care patients are screened (both the birth cohort and as part of routine STD panel) for HCV.
- All patients receive RNA confirmatory testing and those testing RNA + are provided follow up diagnostic testing (genotype, ultrasound and biopsy when required) through St. Luke's.

METHODS

Patients are then enrolled in treatment protocol and monitored through primary care services for the duration of their treatment, and all providers meet weekly via teleconference with specialist at St. Luke's for case meetings on individual patient progress.



RESULTS

Project E.C.H.O. estimates that approximately 68 patient cases have been presented to Baylor St. Luke's specialist and 50% have either been treated or currently undergoing treatment.



Conclusions

- The urban primary care setting is an important venue for providing care and treatment for those with HCV, particularly for those who do not have access to specialists or specialized medical settings.
- With increasingly simplified treatment regimens, primary care providers, especially physician assistants and nurse practitioners, can provide care, treatment and management of chronic HCV for those patients without complicated, advanced disease.
- Therefore, primary care settings should be considered a site of opportunity in treating chronic HCV given the growing numbers of those being screened and requiring care.