



PROJECT ECHO™

Prisoner Health is Community Health

The New Mexico Peer Education Project (NM PEP) Abstract
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Background

- In 2009, over 7.2 million adults were under some form of correctional supervision in the U. S.
- 1.6 million adult prisoners
- Most prisoners are incarcerated for relatively short periods of time
- 76% serve 2 years or less
- 95% of prisoners are released back into their communities



Background

- Prisons are high risk environments for the transmission of bloodborne viruses
- Prevalence of HCV in the New Mexico Corrections Department upon entry - 40%
- Persons released from the criminal justice system account for 29% to 43% of all persons infected with HCV in the United States
- Health education in prisons offers an opportunity to establish disease control in the outside community



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The New Mexico Peer Education Project (NM PEP)

- Developed by Project ECHO™ (Extension for Community Health Care Outcomes)
- Adapted from *Wall Talk*, a successful prison-based peer education program focusing on HIV in the Texas prisons
- Collaboration with the NMDOC and NMDOH
- Pilot Program launched July 2009
- Funding: McCune Foundation, Santa Fe Community Foundation, Project ECHO (in-kind)



Methods

- Inmates are chosen by the wardens at each prison
- Suggested criteria:
 - informal leadership skills
 - positive role model at the facility
 - at least an 8th grade literacy level
- All peer educators participate in this program voluntarily



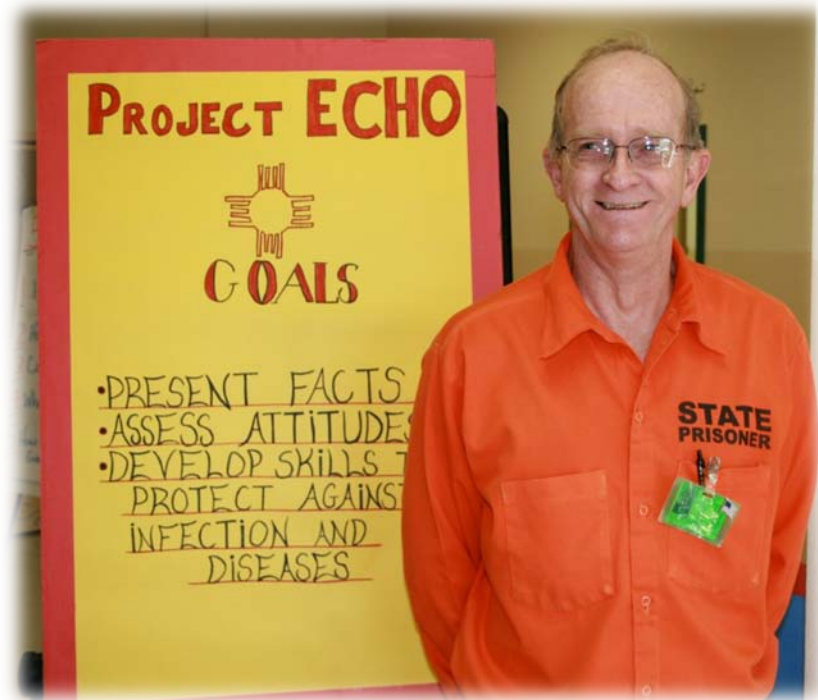
What is a NM PEP peer educator?

- Inmates who have successfully completed a 40 hour training on specific health topics and facilitation skills
- Inmates then conduct interactive 10 hour health education workshops for their peers



What are the goals of this training?

- Increase knowledge of key health issues
- Increase general health literacy
- Reduce risky behaviors
- Increase job readiness in peer educators upon release



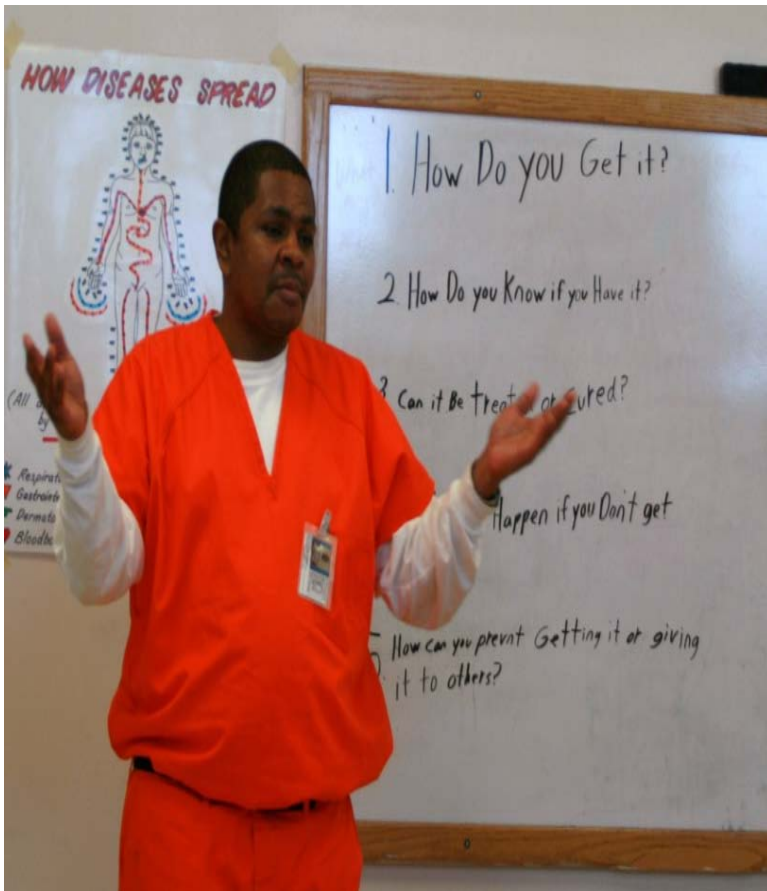
NM PEP Topics

Key Health Topics:

- Hepatitis C, Substance Use and Addiction, Sexually Transmitted Infections, HIV/AIDS, Staph/MRSA, Diabetes, Tuberculosis.
- Harm Reduction
- Motivational Interviewing and Behavior Change
- Exploration of health related behaviors and values
- Skill building in public speaking and facilitation



The Five Questions



1. How do you get it?
2. How do you know you have it?
3. Can it be treated or cured?
4. What can happen if you don't get it treated or cured?
5. How can you prevent getting it or giving it to others?

What is the parking lot?



- The parking lot is a tool specifically designed for peer educators to communicate with Project ECHO™.
- Responses to unanswered questions during peer educator led training are sent to peer educators within 1-2 days.

What does the NM PEP include? (Peer Educators)

- 40-hour intensive training
- Monthly site visit with Project ECHO™ staff to increase skills and knowledge
- 1 ½-hour monthly video-conferences
- Continuing education credits from UNM/Project ECHO™



NM PEP Statistics (since July 2009)

- 21 40-hour training sessions
- 216 peer educators trained
- 1,368 inmates attended 10-hour health classes led by peer educators
- 4,206 recently incarcerated individuals received the 1½-hour class led by peer educators



Evaluation

- Formal evaluation is underway
- Questionnaires measuring knowledge, self-efficacy and behavioral intention are given pre / post 40 hour training
- Knowledge Questionnaires administered pre / post 10 hour classes led by peer educators.
- Qualitative data - focus groups and individual interviews



Conclusion

- NM PEP is an innovative way to provide high quality health education to a large number of inmates in a short period of time
- Peer educators have a unique capacity to deliver factual, relevant information to their peers
- Prisons provide a rare opportunity to reach a disenfranchised, at-risk, underserved population and improve public health



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The New Mexico Peer Education Project

