Telemedicine: The Future of Hepatitis C Care?

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A bill introduced in Congress hopes to implement a new video clinic platform to help expand hep C treatment access and expert care across the country.

The University of New Mexico launched the high-tech program, called Project ECHO (Extension for Community Health Outcomes), in 2003. It uses interactive video-conferences to connect primary care doctors in rural and underserved areas with medical specialists to help treat a variety of health conditions.

Originally launched as a hep C teleclinic only, the program now operates tech hubs for nearly 30 health issues across 22 U.S. states and six countries.

The program is different from other popular telemedicine platforms, which mostly link patients to doctors online. Project ECHO's doctors are mentored by specialists on a variety of topics, including HCV treatment, gastrointestinal and liver care, mental illness, pregnancy care, genetic counseling and trauma.

The program includes weekly video clinics and allows doctors to tune in when they have a particular case or issue they're having trouble with.

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