

## Introduction

Project ECHO is an interactive clinician learning environment that connects front line health care providers with topic area experts to improve treatment access for underserved populations. This format was pioneered in 2003 in New Mexico to empower local clinicians to treat patients for Hepatitis C in their communities. As a proven mechanism to advance treatment success<sup>1,2</sup>, project ECHOs have been created that address over 70 different disease conditions. As the state with the highest rate in the country of STD's and major care gaps due to rurality, poverty and provider shortages, we initiated a project ECHO in 2024 to strengthen treatment networks in Mississippi and elsewhere in the country.

## Methods

In March, 2024, we initiated a monthly sequence of ECHO meetings entitled Sexually Transmitted Diseases in the Community. Each session was based on knowledge gaps based on communications with internal experts and external partners. Topics were solicited in subsequent sessions from prior participants. Survey data from each participant was collected following each session. Data elements included number of participants, practitioner type, education, location of practice, years of experience, and effectiveness of the session (with questions driven by specific monthly topics).

## Results

Between March 2024 and March 2025, Sexually Transmitted Diseases in the Community attracted 136 different practitioners from 10 states and 6 countries (Fig. 1). The majority of participants joined the live session while the majority of foreign participants viewed the recorded materials. Two participants worked for American Tribal Nations. There were a broad range of professions participating, with the largest proportion consisting of nurses, advance practice nurses (APRN's) and physicians. (Fig. 2), with predominant participation from those working in public health clinics or Academic Medical Centers (Fig. 3). Sessions were judged to substantially increase knowledge and skills in the subject areas presented.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The ECHO project Sexually Transmitted Diseases in the Community was a highly effective in improving the knowledge and skills of a large number of practitioners in Mississippi. Nurse, APRN's and physicians serving under resourced populations represented the largest number of participants. Additional outreach is needed to improve physician participation. Successful distribution of content in other states and internationally was an unexpected positive outcome.

## References

1. Wood, Brian R. et. al. Direct and Indirect Effects of a Project ECHO Longitudinal Clinical Tele-Mentoring Program on Viral Suppression for Persons With HIV: A Population-Based Analysis. JAIDS Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes 90(5):p 538-545, August 15, 2022.
2. Brandt L, Warne-Griggs M, Hoffman K, Popejoy L, Mutrux ER. Embracing the Power of Show-Me ECHO Learning Communities to Transform Clinical Practice in Missouri. Mo Med. 117(3):p216-221, May/June 2020.

## Acknowledgements

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Figure 1: Participant Country and State

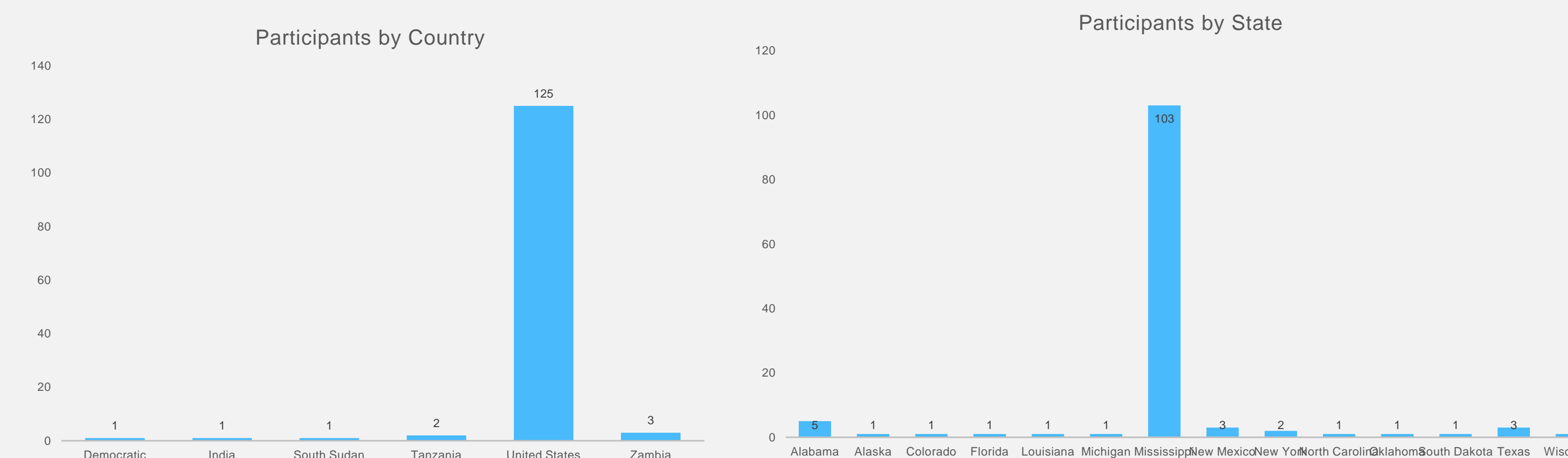


Figure 2: Participant Profession

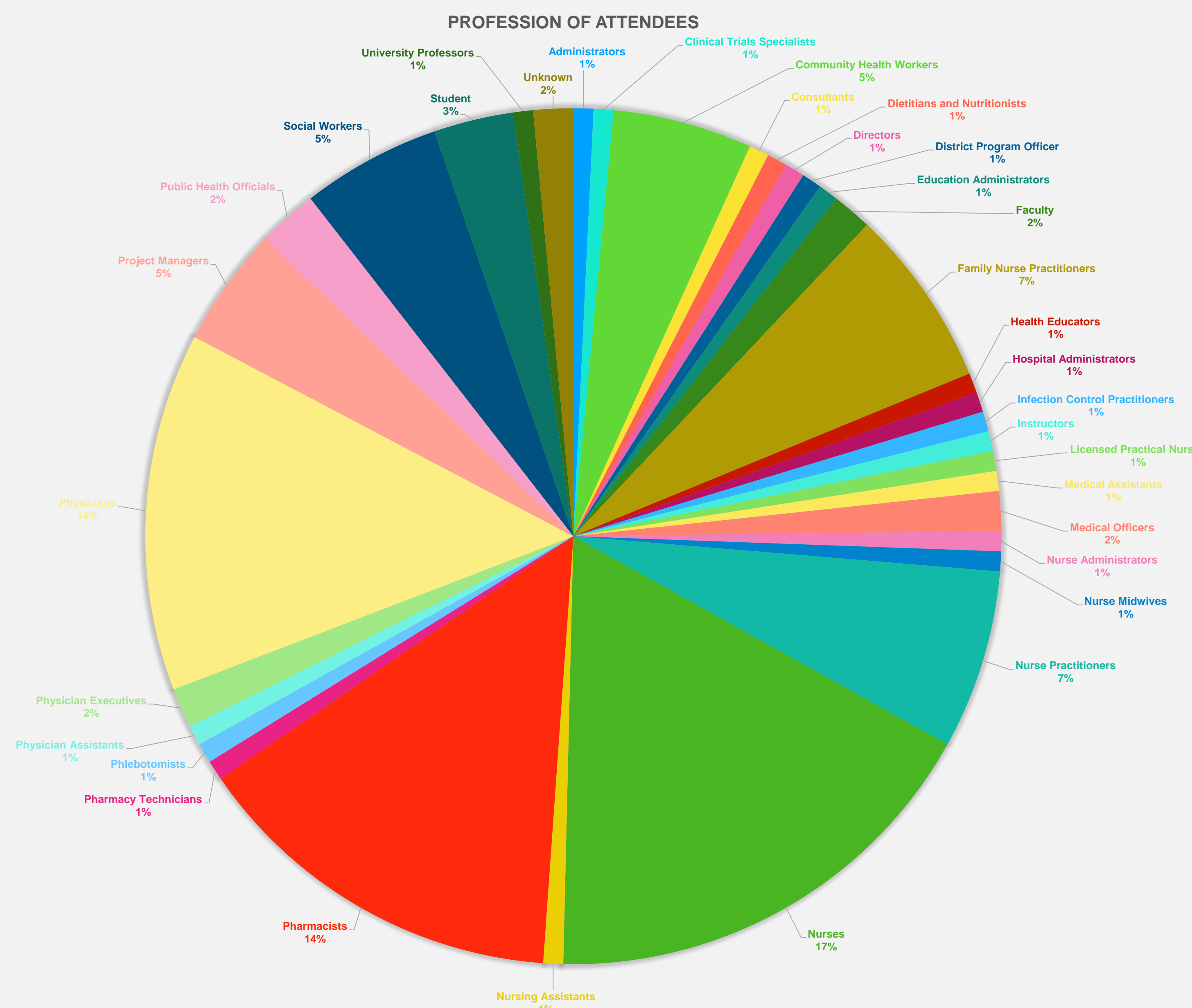


Figure 3: Participant Employer Type

