

GENERAL TRACK

The Impact of Connection: How Relationships Drive Collaborations and Change



Introduction by:
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**SEPTEMBER 1
2:15PM-3:00PM**

REDBUD A & B

www.palmettocareconnections.org

The Impact of Connection: How Relationships Drive Collaborations and Change

**Karen Hartwell, MD and Phillip Hudson
MUSC Addiction Sciences Division**

Local Team

Karen Hartwell, MD - Director of OUD, Peers, and CORI ECHOs

Phillip Hudson - OUD and Peers ECHO Coordinator

Carrie Papa, MBA - CORI ECHO Coordinator

Dave Pruett, CPSS, NCPS - Peers ECHO

Jessica Seel, MPH - CORI ECHO

Peer Recovery Support Services ECHO

- For Peers in South Carolina
- 1x a month on Tuesdays
- Broad range of topics in addition and peer support such as MI, ethics, recovery housing and vaping

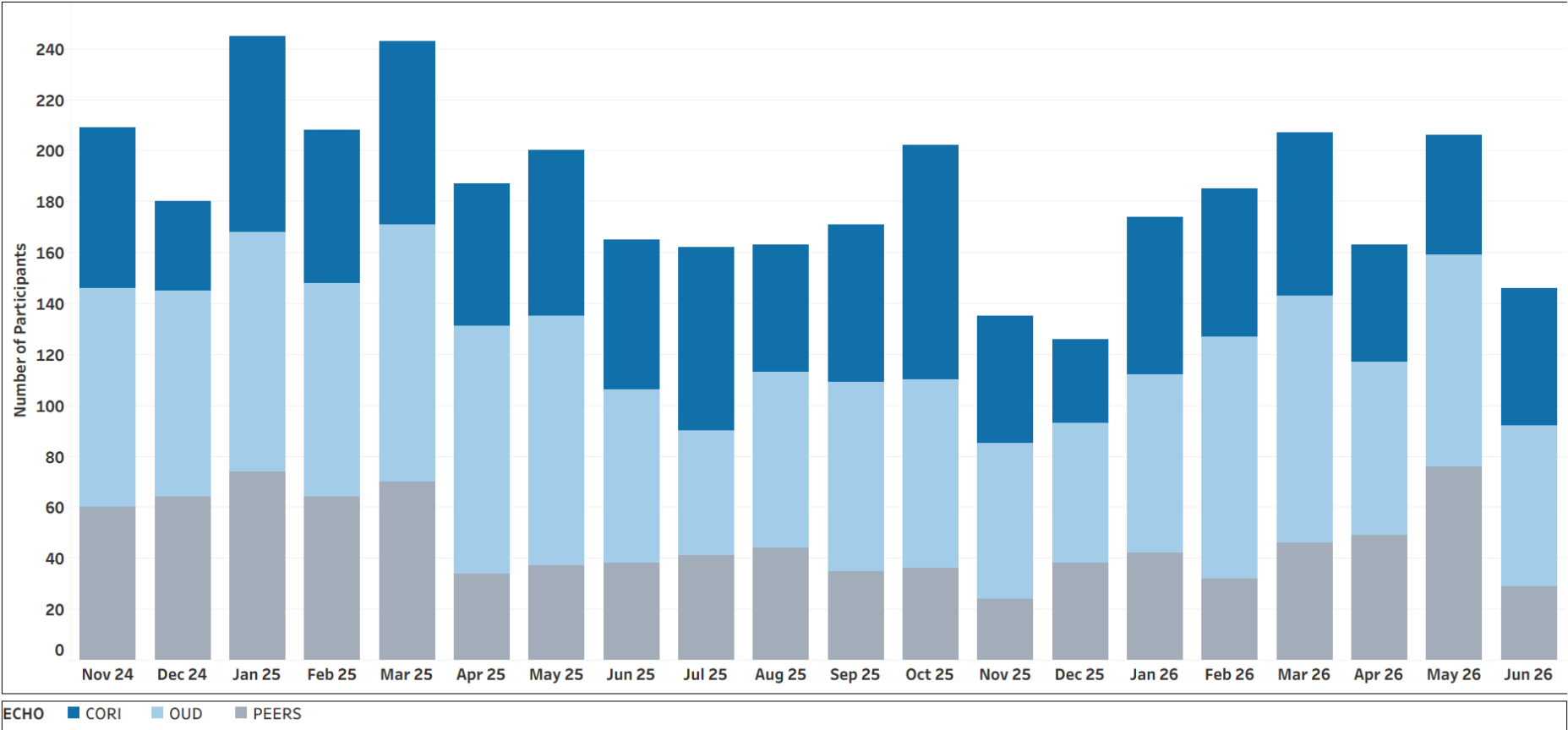
Opioid Use Disorder ECHO

- For clinicians and prescribers working in addiction services
- 2x a month on Fridays
- Topics are catered towards the clinical audience and include topics such as updates on medetomidine, CBT and SUD, MOUD for young adults, and Sublocade in pregnancy

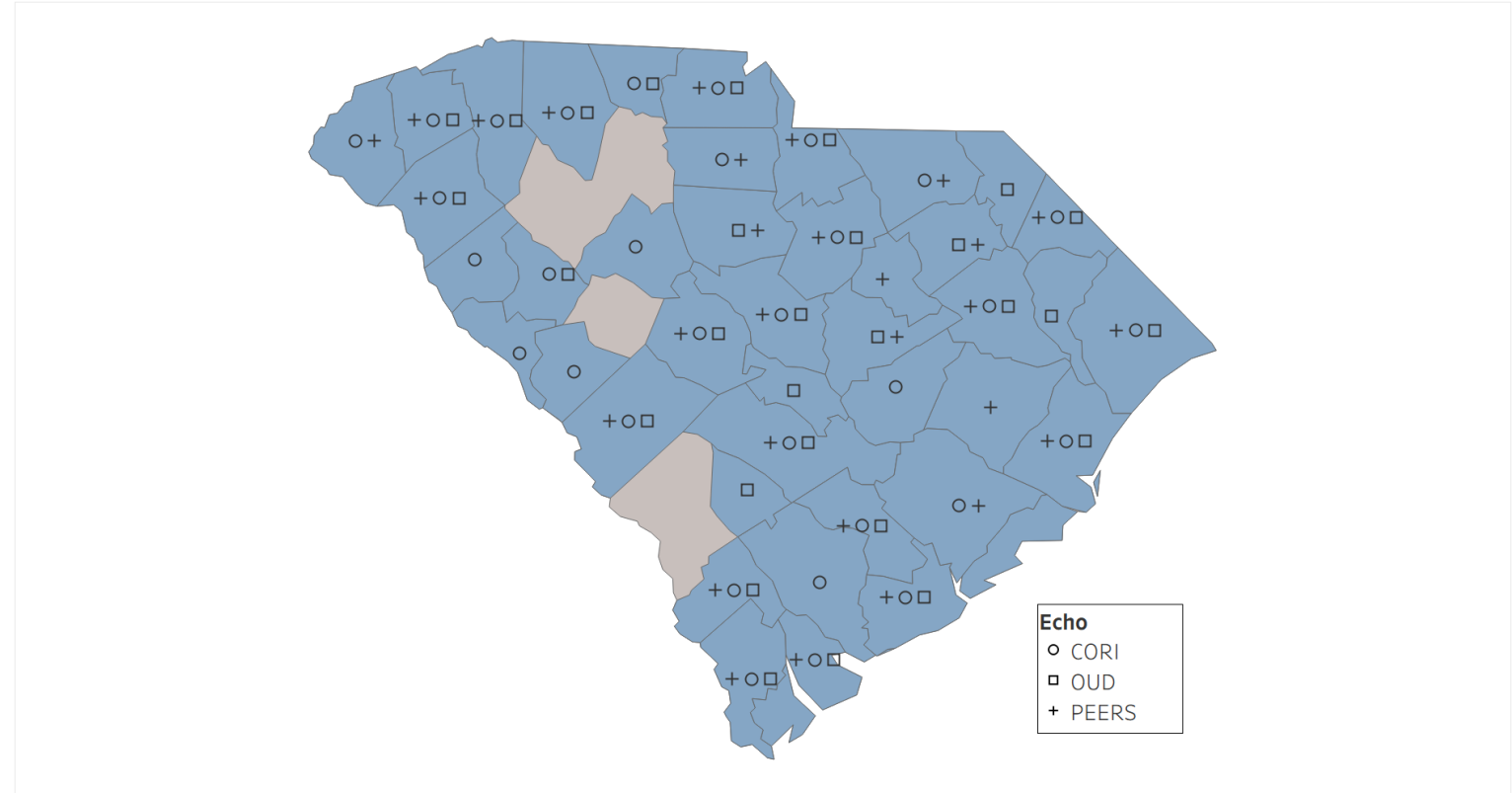
Community Opioid Response Initiatives

- For SC county, municipality and community agencies who are supporting SCORF initiatives
- 2x a month on Fridays
- Opioid focused topics and projects that can be expanded or replicated throughout the state. Ex: Expanding MOUD through mobile clinics, perinatal OUD and peer doulas, addressing stigma to promote harm reduction

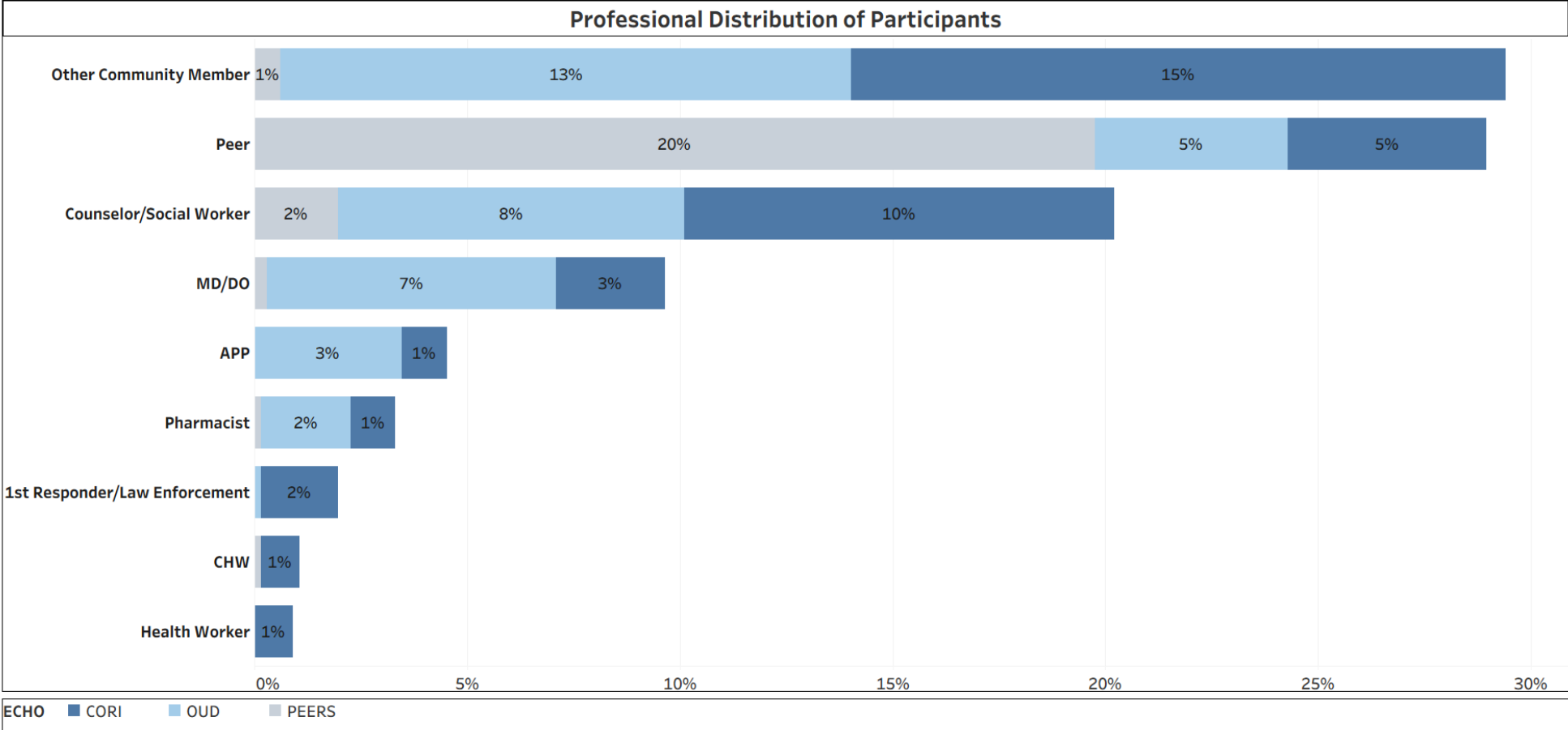
Attendance Nov 2024 - Jun 2026



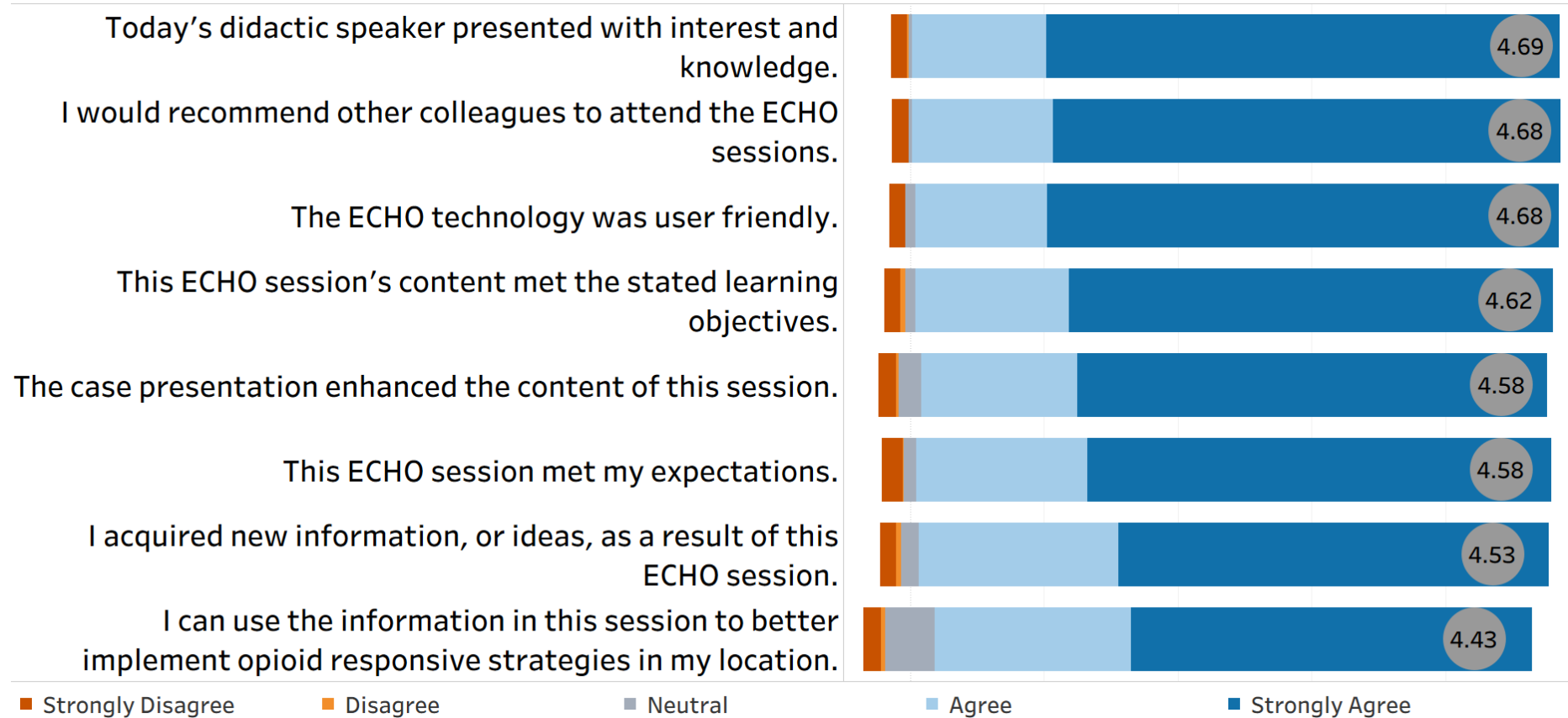
County map for all 3 ECHOs



Who attends?



Survey Response



Connections

- Regular connections to care, housing, peer support
- Links to Center of Excellence in Addiction Technical Assistance
- Assistance with SCORF applications
- Adapt funded SCORF grants to new sites
- Provided trainers and speakers
- Individual consultation
- Connection with indigenous community
- Assisted Texas setting up

Examples of Thanks

Thank you so much for the work done by you and your team. I don't get to attend as often as I would like, but when I do, the topics are relevant, informative, and thought provoking. -PRSS

Thanks for the big things you are doing. -RCO

Thank you so much for this training as it was very informative! -ED PCSS

Thank you!

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Phillip Hudson
ECHO coordinator
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The Impact of Connection: How Relationships Drive Collaboration and Change

Richard Adams, MD, MFM
Rachel Grater, MFA, MA
Ladrea Williams-Briggs, DrPH, MS
Deborah Billings, PhD

Objectives

- Describe how the Project ECHO model creates conditions for meaningful collaboration.
- Recognize the principles that sustain collaboration across disciplines, sectors, and communities.
- Identify strategies for building trust, shared purpose, and effective partnerships.
- Apply relationship-centered approaches to strengthen collaboration and drive meaningful change.

Maternal Health Challenge: Why we started and where we are today?

- 31.2 pregnancy-related deaths per 100,000 live births overall
- 55.9 per 100,000 among non-Hispanic Black mothers vs. 21.7 among non-Hispanic White mothers ~2.5× higher
- 58% of pregnancy-related deaths occurred postpartum
- 86% of pregnancy-related deaths were preventable
- Leading causes: Mental Health & Substance Use • Infection • Cardiomyopathy • Hemorrhage • Other Cardiovascular Conditions
- Higher risk identified among mothers who were rural residents, >35 years old, Medicaid beneficiaries, or receiving inadequate prenatal care.

The need: Move knowledge and expertise to providers across South Carolina.

Source: South Carolina Maternal Morbidity and Mortality Review Committee (SC MMMRC). *Maternal Mortality in South Carolina, 2022–2023*. 2026.



The Power of Connection
August 31, September 1, and September 2, 2026



Why Project ECHO?

Project ECHO was founded upon several important beliefs:



Knowledge
should **move**.



Learning
should be **shared**.



Healthcare improves
when expertise is
democratized.



Technology
removes **barriers**.



But...

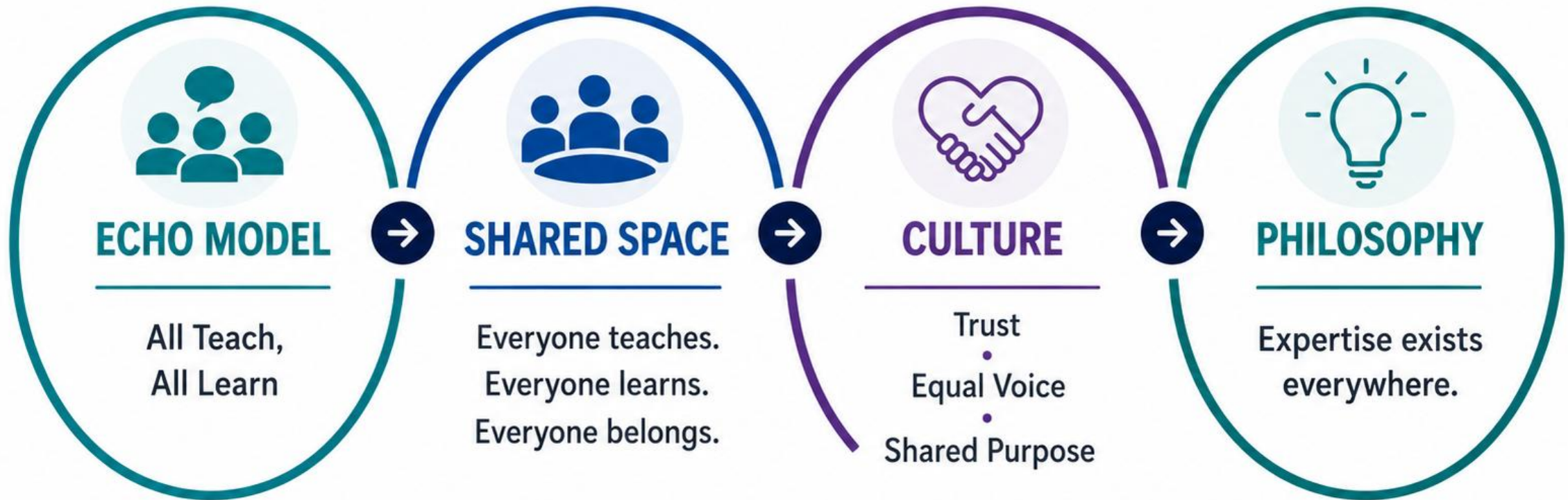
Technology alone
doesn't create
collaboration.



The model creates
something much
more important,
a culture.



The Model Shaped the Culture



Fidelity to the model shaped *how we learned to work together.*

How Philosophy Became Practice



WE STARTED

Focused on physician clinical education.

- Clinical management
- Hypertension
- Hemorrhage
- Diabetes



WHAT HAPPENED

People were talking.
Sharing. Asking.
Connecting.



SO WE LISTENED

We weren't simply planning sessions.

We were listening.

Listening Became Leadership



WE HEARD NEEDS

From clinicians and communities across South Carolina.



WE IDENTIFIED GAPS

Beyond clinical management.



WE BROUGHT IN NEW EXPERTISE

Mental health, SUD, rural health, patient experience, community resources, and more.



WE BUILT RELATIONSHIPS

Introductions led to collaboration across disciplines, sectors, and communities.



WE EXPANDED OUR IMPACT

From clinical education to whole-person, whole-community maternal health improvement.



Our philosophy in action: *Expertise exists everywhere. Knowledge moves freely. Relationships drive change.*

WE BELIEVE:

expertise is distributed, not centralized.

relationships are infrastructure.

listening is leadership.

patient experience is expertise.

trust must be intentionally cultivated.

shared purpose is stronger than organizational priorities.

knowledge should move freely.

#NotUsSC

Community-based, non-profit organization dedicated to pregnant and postpartum Black women and families.



Mission

Our mission is to improve Black maternal health outcomes through education, empowerment, and support.



Vision

#NotUsSC envisions a South Carolina where Black women and birthing people live full, healthy lives, supported by informed communities.



EDUCATE

Create & distribute culturally sound education materials to Black women, their support networks, and the community



EMPOWER

Offer free virtual education for mothers, families, and communities and lead social campaigns that uplift Black women and promote self care



SUPPORT

Work with trusted spaces to connect families to resources, services, and training that protect Black mothers/birthing people

Health Education Materials

MATERNAL HEALTH IN SOUTH CAROLINA

The Facts We Can't Ignore

Black women in South Carolina face real danger during and after pregnancy. Together, we can learn the facts and act with faith and care.

SC Ranks High in Maternal Deaths

South Carolina is 8th highest in the United States for pregnancy-related deaths. (CDC, 2023)

Disparities Affect Black Mothers Most

Black women in South Carolina are FOUR times MORE likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than white women in the state. (CDC, 2023)

Most Deaths Can Be Prevented

Over 90% of pregnancy-related deaths in SC are preventable with timely and correct care. (CDC, 2023)

Postpartum Care Matters

Health risks do not end after birth. Continued support after pregnancy is critical for keeping mothers safe.

SAVING BLACK MOTHERS STARTS IN OUR CHURCH

Faith, care, and community can help protect mothers during pregnancy and postpartum.

Supporting Mothers Together

RESOURCES

[Resource]
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CONTACT US

info@notussc.org
www.notussc.org

NOT ME. NOT HER. NOT ANYMORE.

WARNING SIGNS DURING PREGNANCY

-Don't ignore these-

Know the Signs, Act Fast, Save Lives

If you or someone you know is pregnant and notice any of these signs, get help right away.

- Bad headache that won't go away, even after taking medicine
- Trouble breathing, chest pain, or fast heartbeat
- Fever of 100.4°F or higher
- Bad back or belly pain
- Bleeding or fluid leaking
- Very bad swelling in the hands, face, or legs
- Change in discharge
- Baby moving less or not moving for the past 2 hours

From Centers for Disease Control & Prevention Urgent Warning Signs and ACOG: Your Pregnancy & Childbirth 7th Edition

go to notussc.org for more

What You Might See

What is Postpartum Depression (PPD)?

Postpartum depression (PPD) is a mental health condition that affects about 1 in 7 new moms. It's more than the "baby blues" and can cause sadness, worry, or feeling distant from the baby.

It's not your daughter's fault. And it's not yours either.

Signs of PPD

- Crying often or seeming down
- Guilt or feeling like a "bad mom"
- Trouble bonding with the baby
- Anxiety, worry, or irritability
- Withdrawing from loved ones

If she ever talks about harming herself or the baby, get help right away.

Source: Postpartum Support International

Resources

You Are NOT Alone.
Postpartum Support International
1-800-944-4773 | postpartum.net

National Maternal Mental Health Hotline
1-833-TLC-MAMA

Therapy for Black Girls |
therapyforblackgirl.com

Your love is a lifeline. You don't need all the answers. You just need to be there.
Go to notussc.org for more.

#NotUsSC
Black mothers deserve to thrive

RLS 09/28

Grandma's Guide to Postpartum Depression

You've raised your baby—now she's raising hers.

#NotUsSC

#NotUsSC Black Mothers Deserve to Thrive

In South Carolina, Black women are **TWO** times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes.

SC Maternal Mortality & Morbidity Review Committee
2026 Legislative Brief

Supporting Your Sister

Why your support matters

When a mom feels supported, she's more likely to have a healthier pregnancy, safer birth, and better mental health. Your presence truly makes a difference.

Did You Know?

- Rank**
SC Ranks 8th in the US for maternal death rates
- Death Rates**
Black women in SC are FOUR times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes
- Prevention**
94% of maternal deaths are preventable
- Postpartum**
Most maternal deaths occur in the postpartum period AFTER the baby is born

(SCMAMRC, 2024)

Being an Auntie—whether by blood, friendship, or love—means showing up and speaking up. You are part of her safety net. That's powerful.

Resources

Where To Get Help

- First Five SC | 888.888.8888**
Connects families to public programs and support
- SC Hopes | 888.888.8888**
Free 24/7 mental health support by phone or chat
- Postpartum Support International | 888.888.8888**
Support groups and mental health help for new moms

For more information, follow #NotUsSC on all platforms or visit notussc.org

Becoming An Auntie

What Every Sister, Cousin, Bestie & Future Auntie Should Know

From Bump To Baby And Beyond...

HOW TO BE THE ULTIMATE SUPPORT SYSTEM

POSTPARTUM MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

Depression and anxiety are common after birth.

Here's what you need to know.

Learn more at www.notussc.org/support.

Black Dads Matter-Mentally Too

Your mental health deserves care.

Did You Know?
1 in 10 dads experience depression after baby is born.

(Postpartum Support International, 2024)

Dads can have postpartum depression too.

The first year after a baby is born can affect a father's mental health. Most men won't get the help they need. Knowing the signs can help dads get support early.

Symptoms may include:

- Feeling sad or worried
- Feeling angry or irritated
- Trouble bonding with baby
- Changes in sleep or appetite
- Feelings of guilt or hopelessness
- Increased work or screen time

Talking with family, friends, support groups, or a counselor can help fathers feel better.

From National Black Leadership Initiative Institute

Visit notussc.org/support for more.

PEACE IN YOUR SEASON

Mental Health During and After Pregnancy

Pregnancy and the year after birth can change how a mom feels and thinks. These are called **perinatal mental health conditions (PMH)**. They can last for weeks or months if not treated. With help from family, church, and doctors, moms can get support and feel better.

Perinatal Mental Conditions
can happen during pregnancy, after loss, or after birth. They can affect the pregnant person and also family members, like dads and partners.

- Depression**
ongoing, deep sadness
- OCD**
repeated thoughts or actions
- Anxiety**
constant fear or worry
- PTSD**
trauma after birth
- Psychosis**
severe mental break

"Baby blues" are short-term mood changes that last 1-2 weeks and may include mood swings and worry. PMH disorders are more serious, last longer, and make it hard to do daily tasks.

Did You Know?
1 in 5 women experience a maternal mental health disorder.

If you think you or someone you know may have these conditions, call a doctor or get help.

Church families can help moms by praying with them, encouraging rest, and getting help from a doctor.

RLS 09/28

Visit www.notussc.org to learn more.

Know the Signs

If you or someone you know is pregnant or gave birth in the last year & has any of these symptoms, get help quickly.

- Bad headache**
that won't go away even after taking medicine
- Trouble breathing**
shortness of breath, chest pain/pressure or fast heartbeat
- Baby moving less**
or not at all
- Vision changes**
blurry vision or seeing spots
- Pain**
bad back or belly pain
- Fever**
of 100.4 or higher
- Bleeding or leaking**
heavy bleeding or leaking fluid during pregnancy
- Thoughts of hurting self or baby**

From Centers for Disease Control & Prevention Urgent Warning Signs

go to notussc.org for more!

Education Beyond the Clinic:

Communities as Care Hubs

Meeting families where they are means bringing culturally responsive, usable information into the places, relationships, and conversations that shape everyday life.



The Shift:

From: “I received information from my provider.”

To: “I understand it, I can talk about it, and I know what to do next.”

Where life happens

Health decisions are shaped at home, at work, at church, and in the community—not just in the clinic.

Normalized conversations

Community spaces create opportunities to talk openly about symptoms, warning signs, and care.

Trusted environments

Familiar people and places can make health information feel more credible, relevant, and accessible.

Confident support networks

Equipped families and community members can recognize concerns, encourage care, and support next steps.

COMMUNITY CAN HELP WITH

Navigation

Connecting families to local programs, hotlines, social services, and other trusted resources.

Practical Support

Food, transportation, housing, mental health services, and other barriers that can make care harder to access.

Ongoing Connection

Home visiting, peer support, doulas, CHWs, digital support networks, and community-based programs.

Follow Up

Checking in, reinforcing education, helping with referrals, and connecting families back to care when needed.

Continued Support:

Community Completes Care



BOTTOM LINE:

When every form of expertise has equal value, collaboration becomes possible.

AIMS

- *Listen* to understand the experiences and perspectives of OB care patients throughout pregnancy, birth, and postpartum
- *Bring* OB patients' voices directly into the discussion of maternal health and Medicaid priorities
- *Transform* the voices of OB patients into learning module content to guide and enhance maternal care services offered by clinical and community health providers

<https://shealthviz.sc.edu/voices-voces-initiative.html>



<https://schealthviz.sc.edu/voices-voces-initiative.html>



What changes do you want to see to improve the pregnancy experiences of all women?

Patient experience is expertise

Mechanisms for Listening

Create formats for listening that make sense to all involved in the care

- Theater, radio, panels, grand rounds, online learning, in-person participatory workshops

Connect community-based care and resources, trusted by women, with clinical care

- Value and foster those relationships: referral, but so much more.
- Understanding the fuller lives of the people clinicians serve



[Palmetto Perspectives](#)



SC News

<https://www.southcarolinapublicradio.org/show/narrative>

Narrative: Making childbirth safer in South Carolina

Putting Voices|Voces into Practice: Respectful Maternity Care LEARNING MODULES

Voices|Voces
Moving forward to address
maternal and birth outcomes



Voices/Voces Respectful Maternity Care (RMC) In-person Workshop: Maternal Health Collaborative

SC Primary Health Care Association (SCPHCA)
March 23, 2026

