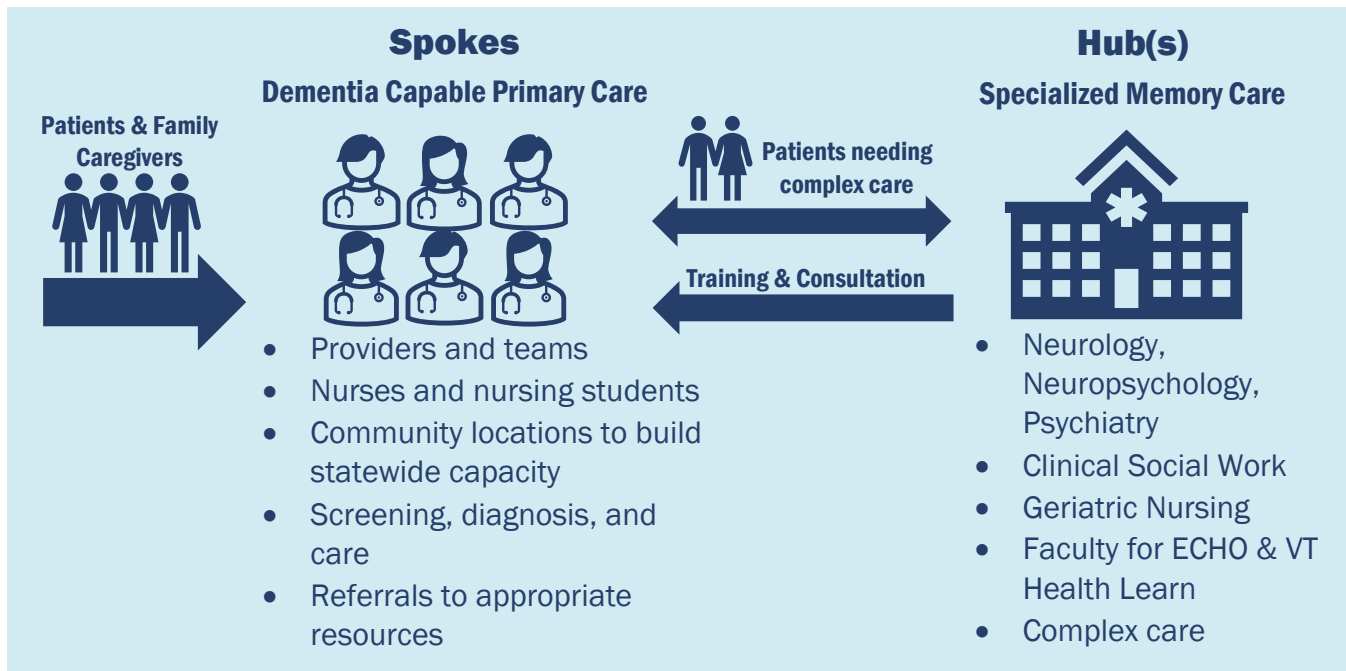


The Vermont **Hub and Spoke Initiative** aims to increase screening, diagnosis, and care for people in Vermont living with Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD) and their caregivers by increasing capacity among primary care providers and care teams. The hub and spoke model is a health systems interprofessional approach that Vermont has been utilized to address the [opioid crisis](#). Through the hub and spoke model, Vermont is able to leverage collective expertise of partners from a variety of backgrounds, measure impact over time, and launch new projects.



Key partnerships:

The initiative is comprised of representatives from many groups and from diverse sectors, including:

- [UVM Medical Center](#)
- [UVM Larner College of Medicine](#)
- [UVM Larner College of Medicine Office of Primary Care and Area Health Education Center](#)
- [UVM College of Nursing and Health Sciences](#)
- [Vermont Department of Health](#)
- [OneCare Vermont](#)
- [Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living](#)
- [Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems](#)
- [Vermont Chapter of the Alzheimer’s Association](#)
- [Bi-State Primary Care Association](#)
- [UVM Dementia Family Caregiver Center](#)
- [VT Blueprint for Health](#)

Other consulting partners include:

- [UCLA Dementia Care Program](#)
- [Project Independence’s Adult Day Center](#)
- [Dartmouth Neurology Memory Clinic](#)
- [Vermont Health Care Association](#)

Key Activities 2023-2024



Project ECHO: A [program](#) for primary care teams that involves discussing evidence-based care, diagnosis, case studies and management for individuals with ADRD. The objective is to provide ongoing Project ECHOs to allow Vermont clinicians and care teams to grow in their capacity.



VT Health Learn: An online learning platform that hosts modules, tools, and resources that can be accessed by health care providers and the public. Continuing Medical Education Credits are available at no cost to support building dementia capable care in VT.



Caregiver Support: The UVM Dementia Family Caregiver Center provides evidence-based interventions such as peer mentorship, counseling, and therapeutic group programs, to grow the capabilities of caregivers and strengthen connections between primary care and caregiver supports.



UCLA Alzheimer’s and Dementia Care Pilot Program: This pilot program is being implemented at the UVM Memory Care Program involves utilizing a new Dementia Care Specialist Coordinator position. The UCLA Pilot is unique for its involvement of both patient and caregiver, developing a care management plan and other protocols that support both parties.

Initiative Goals and Key Metrics

The Hub and Spoke Initiative has partnered with [Professional Data Analysts \(PDA\)](#) to create an evaluation plan to understand the impact of this initiative. Below are a few of the initiative’s goals and current progress.

Goal	Current Metrics
Reduce wait times at the state’s primary Memory Program	147 new patients were waiting to be seen by the UVM Memory Program in November 2023, a similar number to September 2022. In 2021, when the Hub and Spoke work began, there were over 500 patients waiting to be seen (this was also prior to key staffing changes at the Memory Program).
Increase the number Vermonters discussing memory concerns with their providers	50% of people 45 and older experiencing cognitive decline discussed their confusion or memory loss with a health care professional in 2022, the same proportion as 2020, which was an increase from 46% in 2016.
Decrease dementia-related hospital utilization	256 Emergency Department visits and 145 hospitalizations per 10,000 Vermonters age 65+ with ADRD in 2020. This was a decline from 2019 rates, likely due to the state’s COVID emergency response.
Promote use of the Alzheimer’s Association Helpline	516 calls were made to the to the Alzheimer’s Association helpline in 2023, a significant increase from the 401 calls received in 2021 (when Hub and Spoke work began).
Improve the mental health of dementia caregivers	27% of dementia caregivers reported 10 or more days of poor mental health in the past 30 days in 2021.

Efforts to increase dementia capability of Primary Care 2022-23

Accessible Dementia Training on UVM Health Network's Learning Platform.

2 modules were created for VT Health Learn in 2023, and **40 people** enrolled in the Dementia Diagnosis, Treatment and Management modules between January 2022 and March 2024.

66 caregivers participated in the CARERS program in 2022-23, with many going on to attend monthly follow-up groups. Additionally, 8 new facilitators have been certified in the CARERS 3-day training. CARERS is an evidence-based therapeutic group program to improve the well-being of dementia caregivers.

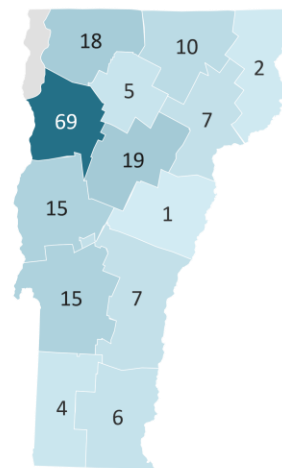
183 professional care providers

(including 142 medical providers and 17 social workers), representing 13 Vermont counties, participated in the Fall 2021/Spring 2022 and Fall 2023 ECHO series.

Effective Dementia Training through Successive Project ECHOs.

68 professional care providers (including 52 medical providers and 12 social workers) are registered to participate in the Spring 2024 ECHO series. The spring 2024 series is focusing on advanced topics including the MIND diet, behavioral modifications and more. For more information, visit [the Project ECHO website](#).

Project ECHO participants by county,
Fall 2021/Spring 2022 and Fall 2023



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Utilizing the Annual Wellness Visit for Dementia care and screening.

34.8% of Vermont Medicare Patients in the One Care Medicare Cohort had an Annual Wellness visit in the last twelve months. The Hub and Spoke is working to increase this percentage through promotion and awareness efforts.

Evidence that Project ECHO is impacting providers' dementia care

In a 3-month post-series survey* of the 2023 Project ECHO participants:

90% said the information presented in the series has positively impacted their patient care. An increase from 68% in 2022.

86% said they have used resources or materials discussed during the series. An increase from 77% in 2022.

57% said they have incorporated specific changes into their practice due to experience gained from the Project ECHO series. An increase from 48% in 2022.

90% said they are more or much more likely to be able to identify resources for family caregivers.

Changes in practice included increasing resources for social work and support groups for patients and caregivers, improving screenings, increasing referrals, changing recommendations related to driving, and offering additional education to patients/caregivers.

*21 Project ECHO participants completed the post-series survey.

Looking Ahead

In 2022, VDH released its [Action Plan for Alzheimer's Disease, Related Dementias and Healthy Aging](#) which presents strategies for Hub & Spoke to continue to advance person & family centered dementia care. VDH, in partnership with PDA, is conducting annual assessments of progress and continually adjusting strategies to meet the needs of Vermonters with dementia and their caregivers.

Hub & Spoke Priorities for 2024:

1.

Conduct a pilot of the UCLA Dementia Care Program in Vermont that includes Dementia Care and Assistant positions, training, triaging of patients and tracking of outcomes.

2.

Continue holding meetings and building participation in this work.

3.

Conduct another Project ECHO on dementia in Winter 2024.

4.

Refresh and promote Vermont Health Learn Dementia modules.

For more information about this work, or to get involved, contact:

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