



BE HEALTHY. BE SAFE. BE READY.

Watch **ECHO**
each month on



(Check local listings
for public television
broadcasts available
in Greater MN)

ECHO **Emergency and Community Health Outreach**

ECHO (Emergency and Community Health Outreach) exists to ensure that people with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) receive life-saving health and safety information. It is a supplement to existing emergency preparedness plans with some important differences. ECHO seeks to reach LEP populations in some of the languages they understand best. That means translating critical messages and disseminating them through the most effective channels in each community. ECHO's mission is to educate LEP populations on health and safety preparedness now, so that in a real crisis they are ready to act.

The ECHO Minnesota collaborative includes dozens of public health and safety agencies, ethnic advisory organizations and non-profit groups. It is spearheaded by Saint Paul-Ramsey County Public Health, Hennepin County Public Health Protection, the Minnesota Department of Health and other agencies charged with public health emergency preparedness.

ECHO's first projects—ECHO TV and ECHO Web.

In September 2004 ECHO proudly launched a first-of-its kind television series in the nation. Each month, a twenty-minute television program on topics ranging from influenza prevention to winter survival is produced in six different languages: Hmong, Khmer, Lao, Somali, Spanish and Vietnamese. Ethnic hosts from each community present the programs which are also open-captioned in English. The series airs on Twin Cities Public Television (tpt)-Minnesota Channel 17 and plans to broadcast ECHO TV shows in Greater Minnesota are being explored.

ECHO TV programs cover topics such as West Nile and Lyme disease, severe weather warnings, avian influenza (bird flu) and family emergency preparedness plans. To reinforce messages and to reach larger audiences, ECHO also established www.echominnesota.org. The Web site features video and scripts from the monthly TV programs and complete show schedules, all in English and the six ECHO languages. This allows people who miss the television broadcasts to view the series on-line at a time convenient to them. ECHO Phone, 1-888-883-8831, a toll-free recorded information phone line, also provides monthly health education messages to callers statewide in 10 languages (Arabic, English, Hmong, Khmer, Lao, Oromo, Russian, Somali, Spanish and Vietnamese).

How will ECHO work in a statewide health or safety emergency?

In a statewide crisis, ECHO TV will broadcast live, relaying the same messages that the state's public health and emergency preparedness systems are providing – but in languages that people with limited English will understand. Viewers are becoming accustomed to watching monthly health and safety educational programs in Hmong, Khmer, Lao, Somali, Spanish and Vietnamese as provided by ECHO's ethnic TV hosts. Live broadcasts will originate at tpt's studios in St. Paul and public television stations throughout Minnesota can choose to simulcast the broadcasts.

-Over-

www.echominnesota.org
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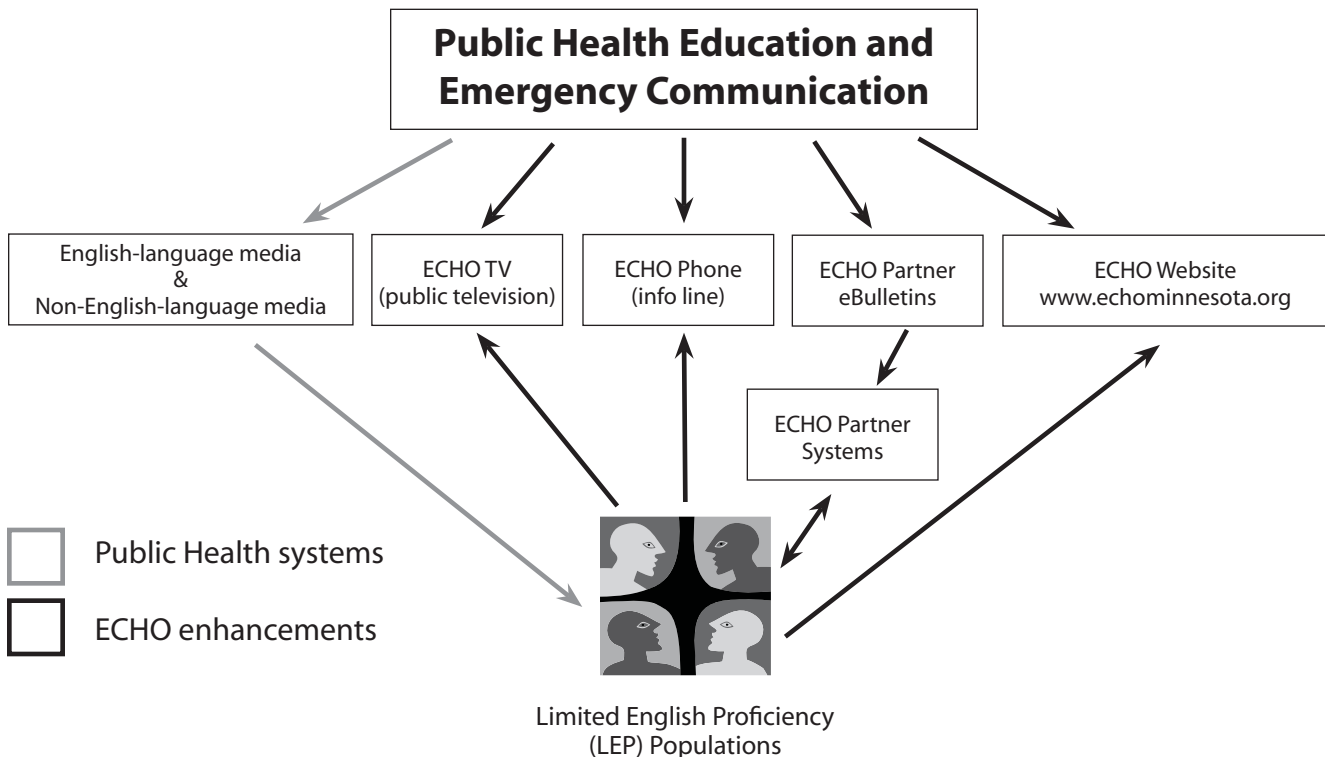
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How will ECHO work in a statewide health or safety emergency? Continued

ECHO Web will serve as an important vehicle for immediate crisis updates in multiple languages. In addition, a select group of community partners will be called upon to redistribute ECHO fax or email content via their pre-existing community communication systems.

Another important emergency alert tool is ECHO's toll free phone line (1-888-883-8831) that will provide callers with rapidly translated and recorded emergency guidance in ten languages, including Arabic, English, Hmong, Khmer, Lao, Oromo, Russian, Somali, Spanish and Vietnamese.



Why is ECHO necessary?

Minnesota is now home to an estimated 325,000 immigrants and refugees from 160 nations. At least one-third of these residents are foreign born. Many speak no English. Two-thirds of these limited-English speakers do not comprehend English well enough to grasp the gist of written information. Many are also children.

If our emergency response system communicates only in English during a terrorist attack, a major disease outbreak or other statewide emergency, it almost certainly will fail to deliver potentially life-saving information to large numbers of Minnesotans. The state needed a more effective way of getting emergency and educational messages to the large and diverse group of new local residents possessing limited-English language skills. That's why ECHO was created.

To contact ECHO:

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