

### ACADEMIC DETAILING – EVIDENCED BASED PRESCRIPTION INFORMATION

The pharmaceutical industry spends over an estimated \$12 billion on the promoting and marketing of prescription drugs, with free samples and salespeople in physicians offices accounting for over three quarters of those costs<sup>1</sup>. The issue of the industry's influence on prescribing is becoming more significant:

- Prescription drug costs continue to escalate
- Drug safety issues/controversies more frequently raised over new drugs
- Lower-cost generics entering the market

Also referred to as “counter detailing”, academic detailing programs provide objective information on prescription drugs based on the best available evidence-based science. The evidenced-based information is used to counter the pharmaceutical industry's detailing strategy which uses salespeople, rather than clinicians to promote its products. These salespeople, also referred to as pharmaceutical reps, use marketing strategies, rather than science, to promote their company's drugs - even if those drugs are less effective and more expensive than other drugs available.

#### Academic Detailing Programs:

- are independent from the drug companies;
- provide unbiased, balanced, evidenced-based information to physicians regarding the safety and efficacy of certain drugs;
- help promote appropriate prescribing habits and cost effectiveness in an effort to improve access to quality care and the health of patients;
- are voluntary programs - physicians may receive continuing medical educational credits for attending presentations; and
- use physicians, pharmacists, nurses and other clinical professionals to present scientific evidence to physicians, rather than drug company marketing materials when describing the safety and efficacy of certain drugs.

#### Sample of Existing Academic Detailing Projects

##### **Independent Drug Information Service (IDIS):** <http://www.rxfacts.org/>

- Independent, innovative program providing **Pennsylvania** physicians with noncommercial sources of the evidence-based findings about drugs prescribed.
- Sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Aging.
- Clinical content created by an independent group of doctors and faculty at Harvard Medical School who review current clinical information on drugs and provide summary/information materials to prescribers.
- Education presentations are provided by trained medical professionals including doctors, pharmacists and nurses
- Clinical topics include: Pain management, Upper GI symptom treatment, Anti-coagulants. Planned topics include Lipid-lowering agents, ACE inhibitors and angiotensin receptor blockers.
- For more info. contact: Independent Drug Information Service, PO Box 990041, Boston, MA 02199, 1-877-410-5750

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<sup>1</sup> Stanford School of Medicine, Office of Communication & Public Affairs, *Stanford Study Calculates Cost of Pharmaceutical Marketing Efforts*, Stanford, CA, 5/03.

### **University of Vermont Medical School's (UMV) Academic Detailing Program:**

<http://www.med.uvm.edu/ahec>

- Provided in coordination the Vermont Area Health Education Center (AHEC). State AHECs were created in the 1970s by Congress to address health staffing needs and promote the quality of primary care services provided to underserved populations through community based initiatives.
- Described as a “free educational opportunity available to Vermont health care professionals to promote high-quality, evidenced-based, patient centered, cost-effective pharmaceutical treatment decisions”<sup>2</sup>
- Provide educational sessions in physician offices/practices by a clinical pharmacist and physician who present objective, unbiased overview of what the evidence from studies show about various drugs used to treat certain medical conditions.
- Sessions are about 45 minutes in length. About 25-30 sessions are provided on annual basis.
- Program offers condition specific information – one condition addressed each year: 2007 Depression, 2006 Hypertension, 2005 Cholesterol, 2004 Heartburn (needs to be updated).
- Form more information: UVM College of Medicine, Area Health Education Program, Burlington, VT 05405, 802-656-2179

### **Accessible Intelligent Medication Strategies (AIMS) West Virginia University**

<http://www.hsc.wvu.edu/sop/index.html>

AIMS:

- Developed as a pilot project within the WVU's School of Pharmacy
  - Provides balanced, evidenced-based prescribing information in certain therapeutic categories to physicians in Charleston and Morgantown areas.
  - Goal is to provide unbiased information to doctors in an effort to promote good clinical decisions in a cost-effective manner.
  - Information is provided by registered pharmacists who visit physician offices to provide clear, concise, evidence-based information regarding the prescribing/use of prescription drugs to inform prescribing decisions.
  - Focus is on the management of hyperlipidemia and cholesterol-lowering products, the use of antibiotics, and the treatment of hypertensive patients and those with high blood pressure.
  - Promotion of generics, when appropriate, is a key component of the AIMS program.
- Contact: WVA University School of Pharmacy, PO Box 9500, Morgantown, WV 26506-9500, 304-293-5101

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<sup>2</sup> *Primarily Vermont*, Vermont Academic Detailing Program for 2006: Management of Hypertension, University of Vermont College of Medicine's Office of Primary Care, Spring 2006. <http://www.drugpolicyfutures.ca/>

Resources on Other Evidenced-Based Prescriber Information Programs and Initiatives:

**Show Me the Evidence: Best Practices for Using Educational Visits to Promote Evidence-based Prescribing** – Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada<sup>3</sup>

<http://communications.medicine.dal.ca/newsroom/detailing.htm>

- First national study of academic detailing focusing on best practices in academic detailing and evaluating the effectiveness of such programs.
- Confirms previous findings that academic detailing can effectively influence physician practices to promote safe and appropriate drug use.<sup>4</sup>

**Oregon State University Drug Use Research and Management Program (DURP)**

[http://pharmacy.oregonstate.edu/drug\\_policy/](http://pharmacy.oregonstate.edu/drug_policy/)

- Oregon State University College of Pharmacy provides the State's Dept. of Medical Assistance and CareOregon (Medicaid Managed Care) with evidenced-based expertise and support of their pharmacy programs with the goal of providing safe, effective, innovative and financially sustainable policy through drug research and education.
- Website provides a series of prescriber tools including newsletters, drug information reviews and summaries on a variety of topics including chronic pain management use, antibiotic prescribing, opioids conversion, etc.

**Puget Sound Health Alliance**

[www.pugetsoundhealthalliance.org](http://www.pugetsoundhealthalliance.org)

- Regional partnership of physicians, hospitals, health care consumers, health insurers, employers and others to promote quality, efficiency and cost effectiveness.
- Clinical Improvement Report makes recommendations to guide prescribing habits based on quality improvement and costs effectiveness measures, with the focus on lower-cost, equally-effective generics.
- Generics are promoted in certain drug categories including cholesterol lowering agents, antidepressants, gastric acid reducers, and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and recommends the elimination of inappropriate prescribing and use of antibiotics.
- Report encourages medical clinics and hospitals to adopt policies to restrict industry sales visits where care is provided and makes other recommendations to limit industry marketing influence.  
Contact: Puget Sound Health Alliance, 2003 Western Avenue, Suite 600,  
Seattle, WA 98121, Phone: 206-448-2570

**Northern New England Academic Detailing Initiative**

- New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine and possibly Massachusetts
- Planning phase involving
  - Inventory of existing resources/capacity
  - Research possible expansion/collaboration of existing programs
  - Exploration of funding opportunities
  - Stakeholders including large employers, medical societies, insurers, state agencies (State AHECs, Medicaid programs, state employees, etc.)
  - Possible costs savings/provider incentives for participatingContact: Prescription Policy Choices, 207-622-3302, [info@policychoices.org](mailto:info@policychoices.org)

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<sup>3</sup> Maclure et al, Canadian Academic Detailing Collaboration and Drug Policy Futures; Show Me the Evidence: Best Practices for Using Educational Visits to Promote Evidence-based Prescribing, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> *First National Study of Academic Detailing in Canada*, Dalhousie University Faculty of Medicine Communications Office, August 16, 2006.

