

# Results of the academic detailing service for primary care providers

Centre for Effective Practice  
September 2019

# Primary care academic detailing service

Ontario family physicians were invited to participate in the Centre for Effective Practice's academic detailing service over 14 months. These are one-on-one visits with a health care professional who offers discussions on balanced, evidence-based information that is free of commercial interest.

- Educational topic: opioid tapering for patients with chronic non-cancer pain
- 30 minute interactive discussions tailored to the physician's needs, at a time and place that is convenient for the physician
- Physicians earn Mainpro+ credits with every visit

“ I am a Family Physician in a Solo practice in London, Ontario. I recently joined the academic detailing program within my region. After my initial meeting with my detailer, I could not wait to sign up for the next session. I have learned so much about resources to help with patient care, support programs for complex care patients, mentor-ship for chronic pain management and the EEnet forum for collaboration about patient care challenges. This program is a “**must do**” for anyone wanting quality CME that translates to your **specific patient care needs**. The program is **unbiased, objective, evidence based** and is focused to your patient and practice needs. It really helps putting the latest data regarding patient care into perspective. The only commitment is your time, and I have over the past 27 years of practice, paid hundreds of dollars to attend one or two day programs that are 1/2 the quality you get with academic detailing and its supportive programs.

— Dr. Keith Thompson, London

# Our service “musts”



Physicians are satisfied with the service provided



The service leads to increased physician knowledge, attitude and skills, as well as measurable behaviour change



The service leads to better patient outcomes, measurable healthcare system improvement and a full return on investment

# Service evaluation

## Inputs

- Pharmacy claims data
- Physician interviews
- Post-visit physician feedback surveys

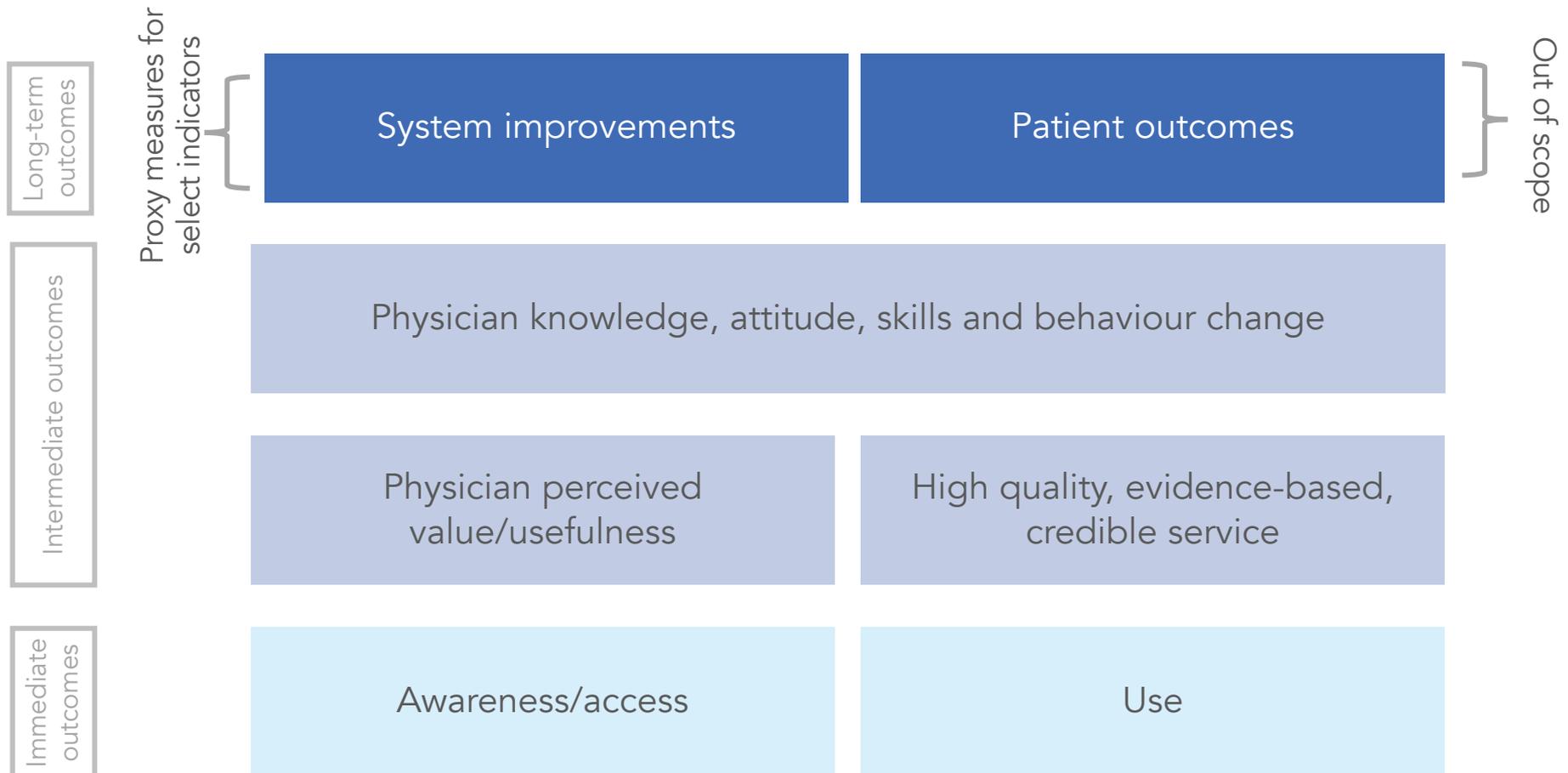
## Outputs

- Impact of the service in primary care
- Physicians' perceived value of the service
- Physicians' self-reported change in knowledge, skills, and behaviour as a result of the service

More rigorous and comprehensive approach than any other group in Ontario that has been funded to address opioids/prescribing at scale:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> party data collection and analysis expertise leveraged to minimize bias
- Pharmacy claims data used to measure actual behaviour change (vs. self-reported)

# Service logic model



# Unsurpassed reach with exponential patient impact

This funding enabled >800 family physicians across Ontario to receive 1:1 support

~1.5 million patients total, 211,456 patients with an opioid prescription\*



- More direct provider contact than any other provincial opioid initiative
- ✓ 95 communities
- ✓ 22% rural, 78% urban
- ✓ 25% northern, 75% southern



- Considerable patient impact as well as future reach to address future priority topics

“ Academic Detailing is simply the most effective method of changing clinical practice to best practice.  
– Dr. Paul Preston, North Bay ”

\*Assuming family physicians have approximately 1,888 patients each<sup>1</sup> and ~14% of Ontario population filled an opioid prescription in 2015/16<sup>2</sup>

1. McLeod L, Buckley G & Sweetman A. Ontario primary care models: A descriptive study. CMAJ Open, 2016 Nov 11;4(4): E679-688.  
2. Health Quality Ontario. 9 Million Prescriptions: What we know about the growing use of prescription opioids in Ontario. Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2017.



## Physicians consistently praise the service and request more of it



Expand what you do, continue to do it, make it more widely available...some of the best detailing that I have ever had and I cannot recommend it strongly enough and I cannot say it needs to continue strongly enough.  
– Dr. Donna Edwards, Toronto

I just think it's a really great service and again, in all the years that I've been practicing, I've had lots of different teaching brought to me in lots of different ways and I think at this stage in my career being a solo practitioner, being out for a while and having a topic that's fairly new and timely, I just think this has really met my needs very well.

– Dr. Jeffrey Remington, Port Colborne



98%

Satisfaction rate among family physicians<sup>1</sup>

- 65% with >1 visit

95%

Interest among family physicians to receive future academic detailing visit on additional topics<sup>1</sup>



# This service changes practice, improves care and saves lives

## An unbiased sample (n=254) of detailed family physicians demonstrates dramatic change in prescribing patterns



- **679% improvement** over matched control group in reducing the opioid (morphine-equivalent) dose for their patients<sup>1</sup>
- 9.5% decrease among detailed family physicians vs. 1.4% among matched control family physicians



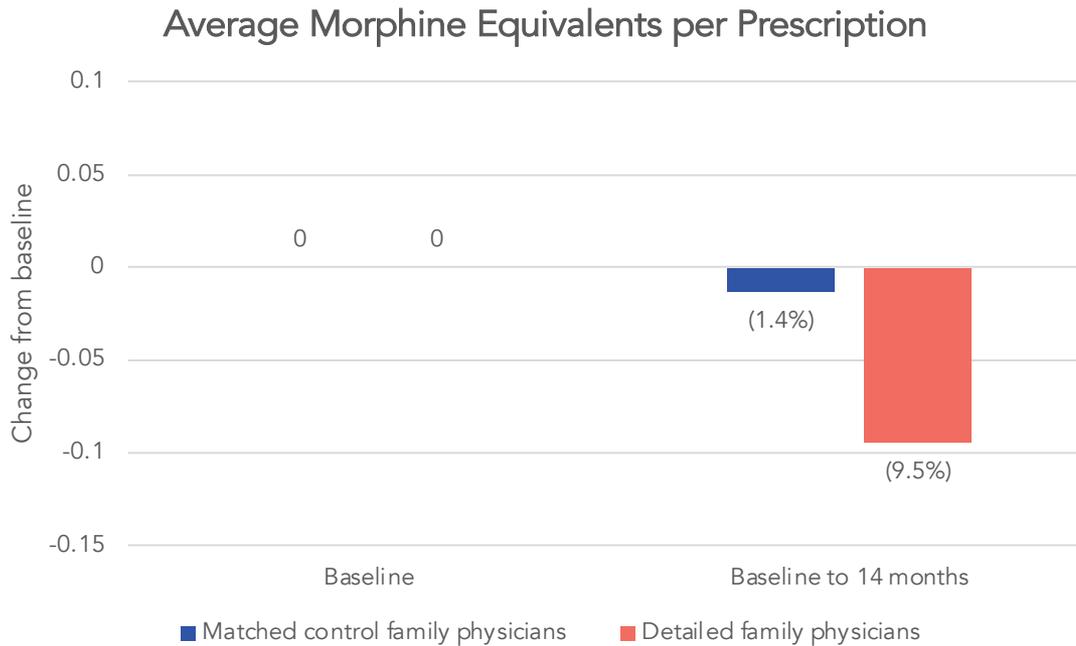
- **409% improvement** over matched control group in reducing the opioid dose for their patients on high-risk opioid doses (morphine-equivalent doses >200mg/day)<sup>1</sup>
- 23.3% decrease among detailed family physicians vs. 5.7% among matched control family physicians



- Extrapolating to 805 detailed family physicians alone, 143 patients were tapered off high-risk doses, 9 opioid-related deaths were avoided as well as 13 opioid-associated emergency department visits<sup>1,2</sup>



# Academic detailing results in safer patient care

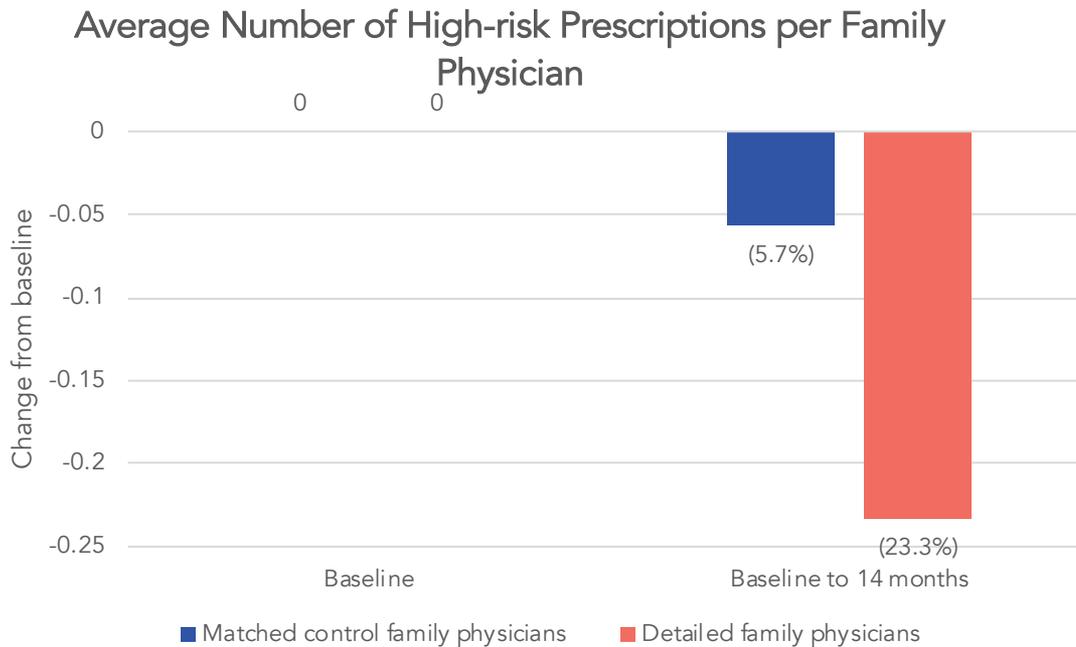


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# Providers tell us that academic detailing improves the care they provide



[It was] very easy [to act on the information the detailer provided]. These aren't rare issues. It's stuff that we see every day — later the same day or the next day, you're going to see a problem where you can specifically use what you learned in your academic detailing session. It's very useful that way.

– Dr. Joel Kroeker, Kenora

The Centre for Effective Practice provides top-quality evidence-based resources for busy physicians. I'm able to provide improved care to my patients that is both more patient-friendly and more up-to-date.

– Dr. Natalie Lovesey, London



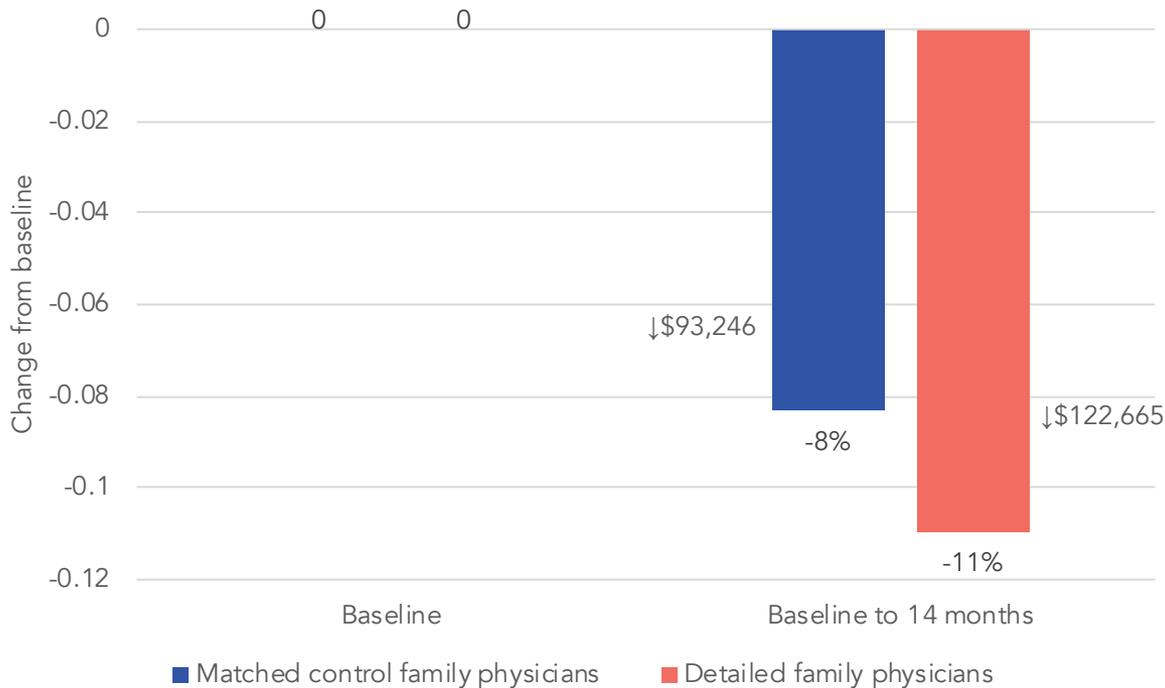
## Academic detailing improved behaviour change by:<sup>1</sup>

- Teaching family physicians how and during what type of clinical scenarios to access evidence for chronic non-cancer pain and opioid prescribing
- Helping family physicians manage challenging conversations with patients and reduce associated anxiety
- Helping family physicians understand the need for clinical improvement (leading to more effective tapering, prescribing and management of pain)
- Enabling family physicians to manage complex patients



# The service has demonstrated cost savings

## Academic detailing led to direct ODB cost savings



A sample of 254 detailed family physicians saved the government \$122,665 in government-funded opioid prescriptions.<sup>1</sup>

Extrapolating to all 805 detailed family physicians, academic detailing saves the government \$1,166,284 annually in drug costs alone.<sup>1</sup>



## Cost savings was achieved without compromising patient safety

Detailed family physicians achieved cost savings through better quality and safer prescribing (i.e. gradually tapering doses and reducing days supply) as opposed to dropping patients



- Detailed family physicians were 15% less likely to drastically drop their patients from chronic therapy doses (doses >50 MED) <sup>1</sup>
  - A drastic drop in dose is often a sign of potentially dangerous rapid tapering or discontinuation



- **240% improvement** over matched control group in reducing the days supply of opioid prescriptions for their patients<sup>1</sup>
  - 6% decrease among 50% of detailed family physicians vs. 2% among 42% of matched control family physicians



## Family physicians recognized the cost efficiencies academic detailing brought to their practice

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This is an invaluable resource that helps me provide current, cost effective and safe care to my patients.  
– Dr. Cornelia Mielke, Hamilton

This program has benefitted our clinic enormously, as it presents evidence-based medical recommendations that help us care for patients in ways that minimize return visits and are cost-efficient. I don't know of any other program like it, and I wish there were more. I cannot stress enough how valuable it has been for me as a family doctor.

– Dr. John Ihnat, Toronto

I think it's really important for physicians to have a source of unbiased pharmaceutical information. Other provinces fund such programs; I suspect they could result in significant savings if they help physicians to prescribe cost effective and evidence-based medications.

– Dr. Rachelle Sender, Hamilton

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