

# Tennessee's Academic Detailing Program

## What is Tennessee's Academic Detailing Program?

Tennessee's Academic Detailing program strives to reduce our state's high rates of substance use disorder, overdose and death caused by prescription opioid medications, through clinician education about safe and effective management of opioid treatment for pain management and awareness of resources for coordination of and access to services.

## What is Academic Detailing?

Academic Detailing is an innovative, one-to-one outreach technique that empowers clinicians to provide evidence-based information to their clinical colleagues and patients. By combining an engaging, interactive approach with effective medical practices backed by scientific research, trained academic detailers meet with clinicians in their local communities to assess the needs of their practices and patients.

These interactions identify tailored, evidence-based clinical recommendations which promote positive change in behaviors, supported by ongoing professional relationships among colleagues working together to improve safety and health outcomes for their shared patients.

## What are the goals for Tennessee's Academic Detailing program?

Through clinical awareness and education on safe and effective opioid treatment for pain management, Tennessee's Academic Detailing program strives to reduce our state's high rates of opioid and other substance use disorder, overdose and death.

ONE Tennessee is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization established in 2018 to prevent the harmful effects of opioid medications through clinician education. It serves as the lead entity to facilitate collaboration among health care organizations and leaders to advance one of the four focus areas identified during statewide leadership summits held in 2017 and 2021:

- Standardization of clinical practices and alignment of systems
- Provider education.
- Integration and coordination of services (medical, mental/behavioral health and social)
- Trauma-informed services to increase resilience

With funding support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) administered by the Tennessee Department of Health, ONE Tennessee established the Tennessee Academic Detailing Program in 2019. A partnership was formed with the National Resource Center for Academic Detailing (NaRCAD) and the Tennessee Pharmacists Association to engage and train 20 health professionals to serve as Academic Detailers who provide information and support to their clinical colleagues across the state. Since the inception of the program, information has been provided to 40 primary care providers through Academic Detailing sessions. Quantitative and qualitative data are currently being collected and compared to baseline data, to determine the program's impact in its first year.

## Why is Tennessee's Academic Detailing program focused on prescription opioid medications?

In 2019, Tennessee ranked 11<sup>th</sup> highest among states for the rate of overdose deaths at 31.2 per 100,000 people, with an increasing percentage of overdoses involving illicit opioids such as heroin and fentanyl.

In 2019, the most recent year for which data is available, the Tennessee Department of Health reported 2,089 overdose deaths, 1,543 of those overdose deaths involved opioids. In 2019, there were 23,910 inpatient and outpatient discharges reported for non-fatal overdoses, more than 11 times the number of fatal overdoses, resulting in significant costs to health systems and payers in Tennessee. The number of overdoses increased 22% from 2018 to 2019, and preliminary data shows even more significant increases for 2020 and 2021.

## There is good news.

The percentage of overdoses in Tennessee involving prescription opioid medications has declined since 2015. According to the Tennessee Department of Health, the number of patients filling prescriptions for opioid pain medication has decreased from a peak of 2,040,000 opioid prescriptions in 2015 (309 prescriptions for every 1,000

people) to 1,028,000 in 2019 (189 prescriptions per 1,000 people), representing a decrease of 37.3%.

This improvement has been attributed to development and use of the state's Controlled Substance Monitoring Database (CSMD) to enable clinicians to check for previous prescriptions for their patients, and regulations limiting the amount and duration of opioid prescriptions enacted by the Tennessee State Legislature as a result of TN Together legislation adopted in 2018.

#### **There is room for improvement.**

- Tennessee ranks #3 for the highest opioid prescription rates at 81.8 per 100 people, compared to the national average of 51.4 opioid prescriptions per 100 people.
- In 2020, there were 5,029,476 opioid prescriptions filled for people residing in Tennessee, a decrease of 33.6% since 2016.
- Additionally, although the number of deaths involving both prescription opioids and benzodiazepines has declined steadily since 2015, overdose deaths involving illicit opioids such as fentanyl and heroin, as well as stimulants such as methamphetamine and cocaine, have increased substantially. Over 50% of overdose deaths in 2020 involved fentanyl.

#### **What are the desired outcomes and targeted objectives for Tennessee's Academic Detailing Program?**

Tennessee's Academic Detailing Program is designed to minimize the risk of substance use disorder and opioid-related overdose and death for people in Tennessee, as indicated by the following:

- Treatments for pain management that offer alternatives to prescribed opioid medications
- Screening and risk assessment of patients before prescribing an opioid medication
- Prescribing lowest dose of morphine milligram equivalent (MME) dosage for the shortest duration necessary for effective treatment.
- Monitoring and periodic re-evaluation of risk for patients requiring longer-term treatment.
- Referrals to mental and behavioral health services for treatment of opioid use disorder, when needed.
- Sharing of information with patient, family and caregivers to increase awareness of risk, alternatives to and appropriate use of opioid medications.
- Sharing of information with clinical colleagues and peers for coordination of care to improve the safety and health outcomes for patients.
- Sharing of information with public health and research entities to identify and increase adoption of best practices.

#### **In 2021 and 2022, ONE Tennessee will build upon initial efforts to achieve the following:**

- Offer virtual delivery of information to clinicians via e-detailing sessions, to safeguard against spread of infectious diseases and to respect time constraints for detailers and clinicians.
- Build capacity and support for Academic Detailers through Master Detailers to provide training and coordination support for detailing at a regional level.
- Foster opportunities for mutual support and shared learning among Academic Detailers and stakeholders guided by members of the Academic Detailing Advisory Group, to learning events and informational materials.
- Increase the number of active trained Academic Detailers from 20 to 30.
- Increase the number of clinicians receiving information through Academic Detailing sessions from 40 to 200, with focus on communities with high rates of opioid prescriptions and opioid-involved overdose and death.
- Decrease the number, amount and duration of opioid medications prescribed and the number of individuals filling prescriptions for opioid medications, particularly in communities heavily impacted by opioids.
- Incentivize Academic Detailers and participating clinicians through compensation for their time, continuing education credits for training received, and recognition by professional associations.
- Develop informational materials for patients, family members and caregivers that are convenient for clinicians to distribute at the point of care.
- Integrate with other clinician education delivery mechanisms, including clinical education programs, mobile applications, and value-based payment initiatives.
- Conduct evaluation of the program to assess and improve impact.

#### **For more information about Tennessee's Academic Detailing Program contact:**

Executive Director Liesa Jenkins at [Liesa@OneTnHealth.org](mailto:Liesa@OneTnHealth.org) or 615-856-1458, or visit our website at [OneTnHealth.org](https://www.onetnhealth.org).