### A Short History: Academic Detailing in Saskatchewan

#### How did RxFiles begin?
- The roots of RxFiles go back to 1996 when a guest from North Vancouver spoke to the academic detailing service established out of Lion’s Gate Hospital for North Shore physicians. Within a year, a pilot project was convened between Saskatoon’s Family Medicine group & the Dept of Pharmaceutical Services for Saskatchewan Health Region.
- The academic detailing program officially began in May 1997. First up was training in N. Vancouver, followed by launch of the first newsletter & academic detailing sessions in July 1997. Loren Regier and Sharon Downey shared the 1 FTE allocated.
- The program materials and visits were well received, and participation grew over 3 years of program development in Saskatoon. By 2000, some were asking “how come Saskatoon has this service and we don’t?” This led to a gradual expansion to Regina, P.A., Battlefords & other rural Saskatchewan areas.
- As of Feb, 2017 – RxFiles employs or contracts with 12 SK pharmacists for 4.5 FTE academic detailing positions. Several family physicians, specialists, nurse practitioners, pharmacists and others contribute to the content, review & training for each topic area. RxFiles does not receive any industry funding.

#### Was academic detailing an easy sell?
- Thanks for asking! The first years were a lot of work as the service built goodwill & established credibility. Fortunately, academic detailing, although short on pizza and sample tests has a lot of other things going for it:
  1) a high value on independently assessing evidence, clinical opinion, costs, practicalities and providing a balanced, non-commercial perspective.
  2) the physician office visits enhance the value of the printed material, ensuring that the information gets a good hearing.
  3) academic detailing preserves physician autonomy and flexibility in prescribing — so at the end of the discussion, the physician decides how to best apply the information for each individual patient.

### RxFiles Drug Comparison Charts

### A Few Perspectives...& Anecdotes

#### On evidence and information...
- Seek simplicity, and mistrust it! Alfred North Whitehead Mathematician (1861–1947) (passed on to RxFiles by the Dalhousie Academic Detailing Service)
- Education is a progressive discovery of our own ignorance. Will Durant, 19th Century Historian
- Figures don’t lie, but liars figure. Mark Twain (1835-1910)

#### On Samples
- On the plus side, samples are a way to initiate a new drug, and it’s nice to offer our patients something for free. So — do samples serve our patients needs well? It all depends... If the drug given is the best drug one would have chosen anyway, then that’s a positive. But let’s say you are going on “life-saving medication” that you will likely need to take for the rest of your life. Would you want the one that is a free sample for 30 days, or would you want the one that has good outcome evidence, an established safety record, and possibly a few thousand dollars less over then next 5 years? Sometimes we serve the sampler, rather than allowing the sample to serve us. And sometimes the best drug isn’t in the sample cupboard!
- Other factors to consider include the impact of packaging & disposal of unused samples on the environment and patient safety concerns given less check at the pharmacy level.

#### On Life and Medicine
- Even when I’m sure I’m right, I remember I could be wrong.
- A merry heart is a good medicine; a broken spirit drys the bones.

#### On the RxFiles Charts
- Thanks, these are getting me through med school!
- No margin for error, when there are no margins!
- Important enough to keep in my purse!

#### On the RxFiles Office
- I was expecting mahogany, &... a little more space...

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**FTE= full time equivalent**  **SK=Saskatchewan**  **www.RxFiles.ca**
Academic Detailing:

Canada
- Dalhousie: [http://cme.medicine.dal.ca/ADS.htm](http://cme.medicine.dal.ca/ADS.htm)

Non-Canadian
- Australia - National Prescribing Service (NPS)

Select Bibliography
- Academic Detailing - Canada

References: RxFiles Academic Detailing: Those One of a Kind Drug Charts