"Making Evidence Matter: Detailing in a Complex Landscape"

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Guest: Megan Pruitt, PharmD, Director, SCORxE Academic Detailing Service, Medical University of South Carolina

Anna: *You're listening to Changing Minds: Transformative Talks for Healthcare Improvement. Grab a coffee or tea and join our team as we chat with leaders in the academic detailing space. For more information on academic detailing, visit us at narcad.org.*

Anna: I'm your host, Anna Morgan-Barsamian, and today I'm joined by Megan Pruitt, the Director of the SCORxE Academic Detailing Service at the Medical University of South Carolina. Welcome, Megan, how are you today?

Megan: Hi, thanks for having me, I'm good.

Anna: Good, yay, we're so excited to get started.

For the listeners who may not know about the SCORxE Academic Detailing Service, can you tell us a little bit about yourself and the program?

Megan: Yes, so the SCORxE Academic Detailing Service has been around for a while. So Sarah Ball started it back in 2007, so coming up on our 20-year anniversary here next year. And it originally started out going to primary care providers throughout South Carolina, which we have continued.

The program has gone through its ebbs and flows of having lots of detailers and sometimes down to one. Currently, we have three full-time academic detailers and one part-time. And I have recently taken over as the director as Sarah starts to lead. So historically, we have focused mainly on the behavioral health topics. And we have recently started to expand to a couple other different areas.

Anna: I can't wait to get into our conversation and start talking about where your work has expanded.

What drew you to academic detailing and what has kept you engaged in this work?

Megan: Yeah, honestly, I luckily met the right person at the right time, right after I had got out of school. Initially, what drew me towards the academic detailing program was that they were working on opioids and medications for opioid use disorder. At the time, I was more so interested in the topic, and I didn't really know about academic detailing.

But then once I came to the NaRCAD training and got all trained up, I just loved the work of visiting with providers and really seeing the difference that one-on-one and you bringing them these resources can make, and especially with the difficult topics that we bring them. Opioids can be a challenging topic for many providers. I think being there to support them was just really, really fruitful.

It has been us kind of stepping out of the opioid umbrella a little bit. We're always kind of there, but just expanding and seeing how other topics can also be so beneficial for them as well.

Anna: SCORxE works within the unique healthcare landscape that is South Carolina.

So how does that local context shape the topics that you prioritize and the way you approach clinicians? So we can get into some of the topics you're covering a little bit more here too.

Megan: Yeah, so obviously funding has a big part of what topics we select. But besides that, we do have detailers throughout the state. So they're visiting with people where they live. And so I think that helps with those relationships. And topic-wise, we always are asking what else, what is of interest to you as part of our visits and whether that's not like a core topic.

We've also developed what are called TIPS notes. And so we have these kind of mini topics, like we've done, benzodiazepine tapering or low-dose naltrexone. So things that aren't a full topic, but they want a little bit more information on to help providers where they are if it can't be a full topic.

Anna: Oh, that's really cool. I like that idea of these mini topics that providers can choose from as well.

And as you know, academic detailing often involves navigating competing priorities, limited time, and also sometimes skepticism from clinicians. So what have you learned about building trust and creating meaningful behavior change?

Megan: Yeah, and just funny, we're training one of our new detailers right now, so just having this conversation with him, I think one of the biggest things that I've learned is we have all these key messages that we want, have our three key messages, but not having to do all three key messages every time and really meeting the provider where they are and what they need at that time in their practice. Knowing that we may have multiple visits with them, we don't have to hit on everything at once and really just meeting them where they are and validating what they're doing if that is the case.

Anna: Definitely. And if clinicians bring up some skepticism, how do you go about that? How do you go about addressing that?

Megan: I think we prepare well in advance. We have an internal document. So we write down all the barriers before we go out. We're prepared with all of those things. And so I think it just takes time. A lot of times we offer free continuing medical education and a lot of the topics that we do are controlled substance.

So a lot of times that's getting us in the door. And then once we meet with them and they see what we're all about, typically just a visit will overcome that skepticism.

Anna: We talked a little bit about this, in terms of you starting to train a new detailer on your team, but as a program director, what have you learned about supporting and developing detailers? And what makes someone really effective in this role, given all that we just talked about with the time constraints and the skepticism that could happen with clinicians?

Megan: Yes, I mean, we have three, or we have two full-time detailers in the upstate and then our new halftime and obviously I detail and we are all totally different.

So I think really just leaning into everybody's individual personalities and letting them be their own detailer. Everybody learns the core principles, but just letting them really be themselves and create their own relationship with that provider.

Anna: Yeah, bringing their own kind of unique skillset to the program. That's huge.

Where do you see AD fitting into the broader effort to address misinformation and evidence-based practice and clinician burnout that's so rampant right now across the United States, as well as in South Carolina, I'm sure?

Megan: Yeah, I think just being, you know, again, we've been doing, we've had this safer opioid prescribing for the last 10 years. So I think for us, it's just being present in their office for so long that they know that they can ask us certain questions when it comes to it.

And we work closely with our Drug Information Center. So if we don't know the answer to something, we can refer them to our Drug Information Center for them to get them the best answer that they need for any given question. And so I think just continuing to make materials and resources for the prescribers that are useful for them, that they can't just go find on a quick search.

I mean, recently we just made a pediatric obesity handout and we made a RX pad for a healthy habit. And so, you know, nothing like that exists out there. And you can just, I think that academic detailing touches on everything that we've learned, you know, through the years and creating something that is actually useful, that they'll actually use and looks pretty is nice.

Anna: Definitely, there's something about academic detailing that you just can't get by looking it up on UpToDate or a similar platform.

Megan: Exactly.

Anna: Looking ahead, what are you most excited about for SCORxE? And what do you hope AD can accomplish in the next few years in South Carolina?

Megan: Yeah, so very exciting right now. We're actually starting to work on taking a lot of the topics that we've done on substance use disorders and creating a pediatric, some sort of pediatric version of that and taking it out to pediatrics. And so it's kind of wide open of how we're going to do this and what we're going to do. So it's really exciting, it's kind of different, but, you know, kind of breaking into a different world of prescribers and with a different flavor of materials.

So that's pretty exciting for us.

Anna: Yeah, where are you in that process? Where are you at?

Megan: Yeah, so we did the topic obesity for adults and then we just created a pediatric obesity. And right now we're moving into pediatric ADHD.

So we're just meeting with different groups throughout the state and trying to, you know, have some warmer calls for pediatricians. Obviously some of our primary care providers are family medicine as well. So it'll work with them, but just trying to really expand what we're doing.

Anna: So you're not only, you know, expanding the topics, but you're also expanding your clinician and provider network. People have grown to know who you and SCORxE are, so I imagine this is going to be definitely a big change for your team. Yeah, it's very exciting and actually interestingly enough back, I don't know what year, maybe 2010-ish, SCORxE worked closely with a group in South Carolina that worked with pediatricians, Q-Tip with Medicaid.

So there was ties before. So we're trying to, you know, bring that back. So it's just full circle here. So it's exciting.

Anna: Yeah, that's awesome. And last but not least, you'll be joining us at the NaRCAD conference in November, on November 12th and 13th here in Boston, Massachusetts to share SCORxE's work.

So what are you most looking forward to about presenting and what do you hope that attendees take away from your session?

Megan: Yeah, I'm just really excited to share what we've been doing since I've started back in 2016 and really how we've kept safer opioid prescribing interesting over the last 10 years and how we've continued to have that as one of our core topics while also expanding to other topics with our prescribers.

Anna: That's great. And we encourage all of our listeners to join us. Again, it's November 12th and 13th at the Fairmount Copley Plaza in Boston, Mass. We encourage you to attend in person but we do have a live stream option as well for anyone who'd like to attend virtually. The registration is currently open and I'll make sure to put the registration link into the show notes today.

With that being said, Megan, anything else that you'd like to share with our listeners, any tips and tricks or nuggets of advice before we wrap up?

Megan: Just I hope to see everybody at the conference.

Anna: Yes, we're so excited and we can't wait to host you, Megan, and to have you present and to hear from our other presenters that are covering topics from sexual health in native communities to how to create an AD program on a budget and expanding your communication techniques with improv and medical improv. So there's a lot to look forward to at our conference and we hope that you're able to join us and, Megan, we can't wait to see you there!

Megan: Thanks so much for having me.

Anna: Thanks, Megan!