

AHRQ Launches Regional Partnership Development Initiative to Promote Comparative Effectiveness Research

The Federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) recently launched efforts to promote comparative effectiveness research (CER), a type of patient-centered outcomes research, in patient and professional communities in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and the U.S. territories. AHRQ has established five Regional Partnership Development Offices that are cultivating sustainable partnerships with hospitals and health systems, patient advocacy organizations, businesses, and other groups that serve clinicians, consumers, and policymakers. You're invited to learn more about CER and to partner with AHRQ by using and encouraging others to use free CER reports and materials, which support efforts to improve the quality of health care in communities.

What is comparative effectiveness research?

Comparative effectiveness research provides information that helps clinicians and patients work together to treat an illness or condition. CER compares drugs, medical devices, tests, surgeries, or ways to deliver health care. The research findings don't tell clinicians how to practice medicine or which treatment is best, but they provide evidence-based information on the effectiveness and risks of different treatments. Clinicians and patients can use this information to support their treatment decisions based on each individual's circumstances.

AHRQ's Effective Health Care Program works with researchers, research centers, and academic organizations to conduct the research and focuses on 14 priority health conditions, including: cardiovascular and related diseases, diabetes, arthritis, mental health disorders, and pregnancy. The full research reports are made available, and findings are translated into practical patient and clinician materials, that include:

- Patient treatment comparison summaries (English and Spanish)
- Clinician research summaries
- Executive Summaries
- Faculty Slide Sets
- Continuing education (CME/CE) Modules
- Podcasts

Partners can participate in a range of scalable activities such as distributing guides at meetings and in medical offices, placing articles in newsletters, and hosting Web conferences that highlight CER findings. Organizations that are using these materials or the CER findings include Mayo Clinic, the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, and AARP, among many others.

Findings from comparative effectiveness research can be helpful to everyone participating in health care decisionmaking:

Patients are often faced with complicated decisions, such as which test is best, which medicine will help most with the least side effects, or whether surgery is the best option. Every patient is

different, and each should make informed choices based on individual needs. By providing Effective Health Care Program products that summarize evidence-based, comparative effectiveness research findings, you can help patients work with their health care professionals to make a more informed decision among many treatment options.

Health care professionals can use CER to keep current on comparisons of medications and treatments. The products developed by the Effective Health Care Program help distill the information so health care professionals and consumers can review treatment options together. When research is not available to answer clinical questions, AHRQ publications highlight research gaps.

Policymakers, business leaders, and others want to make health care policy decisions based on reliable, objective information about effectiveness. Comparative effectiveness research helps decisionmakers plan evidence-based public health programs.

To learn more about comparative effectiveness research, order free materials, access our free continuing education modules or to become part of this growing partnership network, please contact **Tara Schuh** in AHRQ's New York Regional Partnership Development Office at **212-880-5209** or tara.schuh@ahrq.hhs.gov. You can also learn more about CER by visiting www.effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov.