

Introduction: The Shift to a Comparative Effectiveness Research (CER) Model

In a strategic partnership with TruDataRx (TDRX), Spartanburg Regional Health Systems (SRHS) is pleased to introduce the 2026 pharmacy formulary. This formulary is designed around the principles of Comparative Effectiveness Research (CER), a rigorous, evidence-based model that prioritizes medications with the highest proven clinical efficacy. Our shared goal is to ensure SRHS members receive optimal clinical care while effectively managing the rising costs of pharmaceuticals.

What is Comparative Effectiveness Research (CER)?

Comparative Effectiveness Research (CER) provides a critical layer of clinical analysis that goes beyond the standard FDA approval process. While the FDA and traditional Pharmacy & Therapeutics (P&T) committees ask important foundational questions, CER addresses the most clinically relevant question for prescribing. This can be visualized as a hierarchy based on the strength of the clinical question:

- FDA Approval: "Is the drug FDA-approved?"
- Placebo-Controlled Trials: "Is the drug better than placebo?"
- **Comparative Effectiveness Research: "Is the drug better than other available drugs?"**

By directly comparing the efficacy of different drugs against each other for the same condition, CER allows us to identify which treatments deliver the best outcomes for patients. This approach aligns formulary decisions with the highest level of clinical evidence.

How is CER applied to the SRHS Pharmacy Benefit?

A core principle guiding the new SRHS formulary is that higher drug prices do not guarantee better clinical outcomes. As clinical data often shows, there is no consistent correlation between a drug's price and its efficacy, with many lower-cost options demonstrating similar or superior outcomes to more expensive alternatives.

The TDRX CER model systematically analyzes data from meta-analyses and large clinical trials to identify "high-value" medications—those with superior or similar clinical effectiveness and lower cost.

The following sections will detail how this CER-based strategy is applied to key therapeutic areas for the 2026 SRHS employee pharmacy benefit.