

## CERTs Tools and Resources

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Online Toolkit for Providers, Patients, and Families

Arthritis Self-Help Web Site for Patients

Beta-Blocker Fact Sheet for Providers

Challenging Cases in Musculoskeletal Medicine: Online Education Course for Providers

Drug Interaction Card: Reference Guide for Providers and Patients

Drugs That Prolong the QT Interval and/or Induce Torsades de Pointes: List for Providers and Patients

Duke Heart Center Dosing Guide 2005 for Providers

Head and Chest Colds: Brochure for Patients

Medications That Interact with Methadone: Wallet Card for Patients and Providers

Osteoporosis Management: Online Case-Based Disease Education Program for Providers

Over-the-Counter Medicine “Interaction” Cabinet: Web Tool for Patients

Preventable Adverse Drug Reactions—A Focus on Drug Interactions: Education Course for Providers

REACH: REDucing Antibiotics for CHildren: Education for Providers, Patients, and Families

Safer Use of Nonsteroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs: Online Education Course for Providers

Saving Lives with Beta-Blockers: CyberSession for Providers

Tools and Techniques of Improved Medication Use: Web Site for Providers

Treating Congestive Heart Failure with Beta-Blockers: Brochure and Videotape for Patients

Understanding the QT Interval: Web-Based Education Module for Providers

To learn more about CERTs tools and resources, please visit [www.certs.hhs.gov](http://www.certs.hhs.gov), e-mail:

[certs@mc.duke.edu](mailto:certs@mc.duke.edu), or phone 1-919-668-8543.

## CERTs Research Centers

**University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center and Baylor College of Medicine,\***

**Houston, TX:** Risk and health communication; patient, consumer, and professional education; health decisionmaking and decision support; therapeutic adherence

**Duke University Medical Center,**

**Durham, NC:** Therapies for disorders of the heart and blood vessels

**HMO Research Network,**

**Boston, MA:** Use, safety, and effectiveness studies of therapeutics, using health plans that serve defined populations

**Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey,\***

**New Brunswick, NJ:** Therapies for mental health

**University of Alabama at Birmingham,**

**Birmingham, AL:** Therapies for musculoskeletal disorders

**University of Arizona,**

**Tucson, AZ:** Detection and prevention of adverse drug interactions

**University of Iowa,\***

**Iowa City, IA:** Therapies for older adults and the effects of aging

**University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill,**

**Chapel Hill, NC:** Therapies for children

**University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine,**

**Philadelphia, PA:** Therapies for infection; reduction in antibiotic resistance

**Vanderbilt University Medical Center,**

**Nashville, TN:** Prescription drug use in Medicaid and veteran populations

**Weill Medical College of Cornell University,\***

**New York, NY:** Therapeutic medical devices

\*New center as of April 2006

[www.certs.hhs.gov](http://www.certs.hhs.gov)

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# Centers for Education & Research on Therapeutics (CERTs)



## What Is the CERTs Program?

The CERTs (Centers for Education & Research on Therapeutics) program is a national initiative mandated by Congress to improve the safety and effectiveness of therapeutics—drugs, medical devices, and biological products such as vaccines.

The CERTs conduct state-of-the-art research about the use, risks and benefits, cost effectiveness, and safety of therapeutics. The program provides objective information to patients, doctors, pharmacists, health plan providers, and others to improve the quality of health care while reducing costs.

Established by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) in consultation with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the program consists of a network of research centers, public and private partners, a coordinating center, and a national steering committee.

## Why Was the CERTs Program Created?

Drugs and other therapeutic products have improved the lives of many Americans. However, our current system does not guarantee that they will be used safely and effectively, nor that all adverse effects have been identified before they are put on the market.

Today, with more choices available than ever before, people need independent, unbiased information about the benefits *and* risks of various therapeutic products—information that often does not exist or is not readily available. While the government, pharmaceutical companies, and others continue to conduct critical research, vital questions remain unanswered. The CERTs program was created to address this need.

Using the most complete information available, people can make better decisions to choose the safest, most effective, and least expensive alternative therapeutic product.

## CERTs Partnerships

Partnership is the cornerstone of the CERTs program. The CERTs collaborate with a large number of public and private organizations to achieve their mission and serve as a trusted national resource for people seeking information about medical therapies.

## CERTs Projects

The CERTs have completed hundreds of projects designed to provide unbiased information about therapeutic products on the U.S. market.

Project topics are diverse, ranging from the emergence of antibiotic-resistant bacterial infections to the role of the news media in communicating medical risks. Of course, conducting research is only the first step. Informing and educating others is a primary focus of the program. The CERTs work to ensure that the information gets into the hands of those who need it.

## CERTs Results in Action

CERTs researchers found a link between rickets in breastfed children and a lack of vitamin D supplementation, especially among black infants. As a result of this study, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services made vitamin D available free for breastfed babies through its Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program.

In another study, CERTs researchers found that erythromycin, an antibiotic prescribed to treat everything from strep throat to gonorrhea, increases the chances of sudden cardiac death fivefold when used with several common drugs prescribed for infections and high blood pressure. Results of this study are helping providers make more informed choices about which antibiotics to prescribe when patients are taking multiple medications. CERTs researchers continue to study the safety of older medicines, including how they interact with newer drugs.

The CERTs program receives funds from both public and private sources, with AHRQ providing core financial support.

