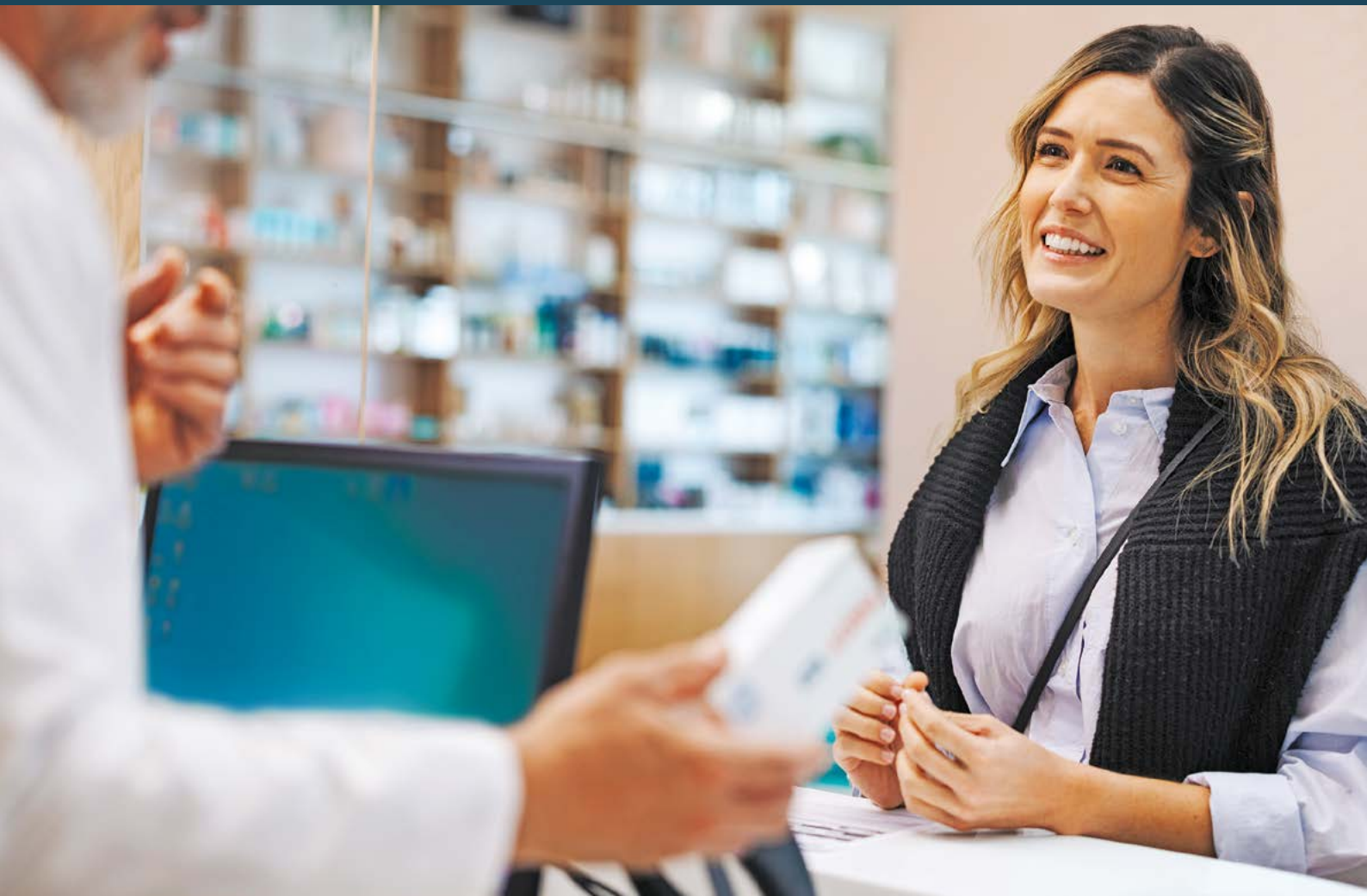


# HEALTH KEY PRIORITIES: A GOVERNMENT & INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP

How the over-the-counter medicines industry can work with Government to relieve the pressure on GPs and Emergency Departments, streamline regulation, improve the nation's health and save taxpayers money.



**CHPNZ**

CONSUMER HEALTHCARE  
PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION NZ

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

New Zealand is facing a shortage of general practitioners (GPs) and a high percentage of GPs are closing their books to new patients.<sup>1</sup>

Concurrently, pressure continues to mount on the Emergency Departments (EDs) of our nation's public hospitals.

In the face of such urgent demand the government – working together with other industry providers where possible – has identified the top priority health targets to be achieved.

**On 7 March 2025, Health Minister Hon Simeon Brown released his five key priorities for Health New Zealand:**

- 1. Focusing Health New Zealand on delivering the basics and achieving targets.**
- 2. Fixing primary healthcare to ensure Kiwis have timely access to a doctor.**
- 3. Reducing emergency department wait times so that 95 percent of people are admitted, discharged or transferred within six hours.**
- 4. Clearing the elective surgery backlog by partnering with the private sector to deliver more planned care.**
- 5. Investing in health infrastructure, both physical and digital, so that we are building for the future.**

The use of over the counter (OTC) medicines and treatment is known internationally as **'self-care'**. It has unrealised potential to produce better overall health outcomes and relieve pressure on New Zealand's overburdened primary healthcare sector.

As the peak body for over the counter medicines, Consumer Healthcare Products New Zealand (CHPNZ) and its members play an important part.



**Over the last decade, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic, the self-care movement has seen more people globally access the safest, innovative and most effective non-prescription medicines available.**

**New Zealanders were not among them.**

This doesn't seem to make sense as New Zealanders are practical individuals and increasingly they are taking a self-care approach to their health, specifically for minor ailments and treatable illnesses through the use of OTC medicines and products.

Many check for an OTC solution to minor illness or ailments before consulting their GP because of the increasing difficulty to access a general practitioner in New Zealand<sup>2</sup>. In fact, General Practice Aotearoa says these are among the most challenging times GPs have ever faced.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, New Zealanders are denied access to a number of highly effective, low risk medicines and treatments, simply because they live in New Zealand.

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<sup>1</sup> Victoria University of Wellington study quoted in Radio New Zealand story 29 January 2025 **Staff shortages key driver as more general practices turn away new patients | RNZ News**

<sup>2</sup> The 2023/24 New Zealand Health Survey **Annual Update of Key Results 2023/24: New Zealand Health Survey.**

<sup>3</sup> General Practice New Zealand media release November 20, 2024: **2023/24 New Zealand Health Survey: One quarter of kiwi adults unable to access general practice**

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Further barriers to treatment arise in the unnecessary delays caused by regulations that require bespoke packaging – again only for New Zealanders.

**It is now more important than ever that industry and government work together to provide New Zealanders – and promotes easy access to – the safest and most highly effective non-prescription medicines, relieving the pressure on the public health system and achieving better health outcomes.**

### Checking the numbers

While for both adults and children, visits to the GP have decreased during the last five years, 21.3% of children visited EDs in 2023-24, up from 15.1% in 2018-19.<sup>4</sup>

Visits in 2023-24 were highest among children aged 0-4 years (30.6%) and disabled children (28.6%).

A higher percentage of adults also visited EDs in 2023-4 compared with five years earlier.<sup>5</sup>

The workload of GPs will only increase due to New Zealand's ageing population, who generally suffer more ailments.<sup>6</sup> In three years **the number of people aged 65 years or older is likely to hit 1 million**. This number **will continue to considerably increase over the next 50 years** according to Statistics New Zealand population projections.

**Already New Zealand's primary care reality is an '8am scramble' for GP appointments and the use of EDs for non-emergencies such as minor ailments and self-treatable illnesses.**



A high proportion of illness and injury treatment could instead be available without the need to visit a GP or ED via an **OTC product**.

For many it's already become natural to visit a pharmacy or buy OTC medicine in the supermarket aisles. While a challenge to quantify, the likely impact of expanded access to self-care options on better health outcomes is huge.

What is happening with self-care in New Zealand reflects world-wide trends.

**Self-care is becoming increasingly essential across the globe as all nations face both a health-worker skills shortage and an ageing population. New Zealand is best placed to provide relief for both people and the health system if government and industry work together. This is recognised through the inclusion of self-care in the agenda of the World Health Organisation (WHO).** Such prioritisation underscores how **self-care is considered a major good health outcomes alternative**.

Pharmacies, and the dedicated and highly qualified pharmacists who work there, have the trust and confidence of Kiwis. They provide easy access to self-medication and are relied on for advice, playing a crucial role in ensuring patients understand how products work best and when to seek further medical advice.

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<sup>4</sup> Annual Update of Key Results 2023/24: New Zealand Health Survey.

<sup>5</sup> Annual Update of Key Results 2023/24: New Zealand Health Survey.

<sup>6</sup> One million people aged 65+ by 2028 | Stats NZ





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**Government and industry working together can lessen the pressure on an over-strained primary healthcare system, including GPs and EDs, to support better health outcomes for New Zealanders.**

Furthermore, evidence shows antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is fast becoming a global health crisis, where the use of OTC products in both prevention and treatment of minor infection<sup>7</sup> can reduce the need for prescription medicines, such as antibiotics.

Government, CHPNZ members, pharmacies and especially the regulator, Medsafe, need to work towards self-care literacy as a common goal to provide advice and access to safe and effective products.

**By taking THREE STEPS we have the opportunity to educate and empower New Zealanders in self-care.**

**We must**

- 1. Widen access to OTC medicine by streamlining regulatory approvals** for the best and safest available medicines.
- 2. Improve health literacy** through education to empower more proactive self-care for minor ailments; and
- 3. Take on the lessons of COVID-19 and again use the pharmacy network effectively by increasing the use of the 'pharmacist only' restricted medicine option** so there's greater access to safe, new and improved OTC medicines.

Success and ensuring good health outcomes requires a public-private collaboration approach – like other nations, we can join together to achieve this.



<sup>7</sup> Antimicrobials can include cleaning disinfectants and soaps and non-prescription treatments such as antivirals, antiseptics, and antifungals (Global Self-Care Federation Brief on the Value of Self-Care in AMR Containment February 2025).



## WHAT IS SELF-CARE?

The Global Self-Care Federation, in which CHPNZ is actively involved and serves on the Federation board, defines self-care as

***“... the practice of individuals looking after their own health using the knowledge and information available to them. It is a decision-making process that empowers individuals to look after their own health efficiently and conveniently, in collaboration with health and social care professionals as needed.”***

***Self-care is the ability of individuals, families and communities to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health and cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a health worker. The scope of self-care in this definition includes health promotion; disease prevention and control; self-medication; giving care to dependent people seeking hospital, specialist or primary care when needed; and rehabilitation, including palliative care.***

***Self-care interventions are tools that support self-care. These include evidence-based, high-quality medicines, devices, diagnostics and/or digital interventions that can be provided fully or partially outside formal health services and be used with or without a health worker.<sup>8</sup>***

**The WHO definition expands on the crucial requirement to empower people with the ability to self-medicate to take care of minor ailments.**

The significance of self-care to the WHO is underpinned by the fact it is included in the critical agendas of the WHO Executive Board Meeting and the subsequent World Health Assembly.

People can play a central role to protect themselves from ill health, by improving and maintaining healthy lifestyles, choosing the most appropriate treatment and best managing their long-term conditions.

Furthermore, the Global Self-Care Federation (GSCF) is advocating for the responsible **use of non-prescription antimicrobials<sup>9</sup> to help fight microbe resistance.** Non-prescription antimicrobials (NPAs) support infection prevention and control, reducing the need for prescription antibiotics. When treatment duration and dosage are respected, common health conditions treated with NPAs and the **types of products available in self-care, can help curb minor infections and their spread.**

<sup>8</sup> Self-care for health and well-being

<sup>9</sup> Global Self Care Federation, *Brief on the Value of Self-Care in AMR Containment* February 2025

## THE SELF-CARE CONTINUUM FROM THE UK SELF-CARE FORUM

### The Self-Care Continuum

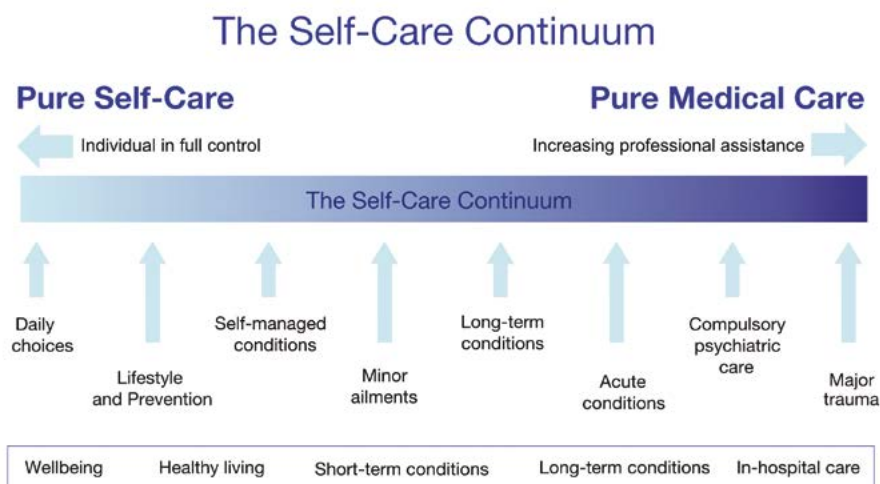
The continuum below illustrates the sliding scale of self-care, starting with the individual responsibility people take in making daily choices about their lifestyle, such as brushing their teeth, eating healthily or choosing to do exercise.

Moving along the scale, people can often take care of themselves when they have common conditions such as sore throats, coughs etc, for example by using over-the-counter medicines. The same is true for long term conditions where people often self-manage without intervention

from a health professional. People with a long term condition spend on average 4 hours a year with a health professional, which means the remaining 8756 hours are spent self-managing.

At the opposite end of the continuum is “major trauma” where responsibility for care is entirely in the hands of the healthcare professionals, until the start of recovery when self-care can begin again.

The NHS can support people to self-care at any point during the continuum. Self-care is not no care.



Credit: Australian Self-Care Alliance





## WHY IS SELF-CARE GOOD FOR PEOPLE ?<sup>10</sup>

Empowering people with the confidence and knowledge to look after themselves when they can, and access health services when they need to, gives them greater control of their own health and encourages healthy behaviours that help prevent ill health in the long-term.

In many cases people can take care of their common conditions, reducing the number of surgery visits, which enables health professionals to focus on caring for higher risk patients, such as those with co-morbidities, the very young and the elderly.

In the UK, it was found that cost-effective use of stretched National Health Service (NHS) resources **allows money to be spent where it's most needed.**

**Ultimately, better self-care and knowledge can greatly contribute to healthier New Zealanders and the longer-term sustainability of the health system.**

<sup>10</sup> UK Self-Care Forum **What is self-care and why is it good for people and the NHS? – Self-Care Forum**



## MEANWHILE IN NEW ZEALAND...

For many years policy advisors, including those at our own Ministry of Health, have understood the link between health literacy or self-care, and better community health outcomes.

In 2018 CHPNZ conducted landmark research into New Zealanders' extensive use of OTC medicine. The results were almost identical to research previously conducted in other western nations.

### PHARMACY DISRUPTORS

**Discount chemist brands** entering the New Zealand market and their permanent removal of standard prescription charges has also improved access.

These brands satisfied the needs of many new consumers who now see value where previously they saw unaffordability. They may have chosen to go without treatment or to visit a GP or ED, depending on the seriousness of the injury or illness.

The research showed there is a **strong relationship between a person's health literacy and their health status.**



The CHPNZ report showed a trend of rising demand for OTC medicine and advice.

Significantly, the local study found that:

# 68%

**of New Zealanders purchase an OTC medicine to deal with a minor ailment, with visiting a GP or purchasing a prescription medicine as a secondary solution.**

# 56%

**of consumers are prepared to pay more for a wider range of OTC medicines to be available.**

# 78%

**of consumers purchase painkillers over-the-counter – the most commonly purchased OTC medicine in New Zealand.**

# 50%

**of consumers would visit their GP if their symptoms still remained after using an OTC medicine.**

We know that these numbers were compounded during the Covid 19 pandemic. Evidence for this comes from a major study into the economic and social value of self-care in Europe<sup>11</sup>.

CHPNZ's 2018 research also showed that its members, acting in partnership across the sector, played **a significant role in improving health literacy and saving Vote Health dollars.**

**It is especially important that further action is taken ahead of the demographic change of an increasingly older population in the coming decades.**

<sup>11</sup> "Self-Care in Europe: Economic and Social Impact on Individuals and Society", Thieme: Gesundheit ökon Quality management, 2023. Commissioned by AESGP, the Association of the European Self-Care Industry. See study summary: [AESGP\\_brochure-WEB\\_single-pages.pdf](#)





## REALISING THE POTENTIAL OF SELF-CARE

Urgent work is needed on the regulation and supply of both prescription and OTC medicines, so that New Zealanders can access the safest and most effective treatments like those in other western nations, including Australia.

Adequate investment is needed for regulatory approvals of applications. This could start with updating Medsafe's resources, particularly its 30-year-old IT system which is cumbersome and no longer fit-for-purpose.

The regulator has battled on and adapted, particularly during the unprecedented demands of the pandemic. But inappropriate IT systems and a 45-year-old Medicines Act are now having long-term effects on the nation's ability to preserve the self-care paradigm and maximise a 'low hanging fruit' opportunity to free up frontline health resources.

Globally, greater consideration to OTC applications and their subsequent availability has resulted in considerable, quantifiable return on investment – in both fiscal savings and relieving pressure on the wider public health system.

The regulatory environment is currently fragile. For many years there was a backlog of Medsafe applications, which had a considerable impact on consumers and the wider health system. The backlog grew over several years and peaked in 2023. Rather than relying on anecdotal experience, CHPNZ commissioned leading strategic consultancy Castalia to independently analyse **Medsafe's own self-reporting data, deeming the regulator's performance as 'poor'.**

*"Medsafe's staff and resources are under enormous pressure which has led to extensive delays to the regulatory approval of safer and more effective medicines."<sup>12</sup>*

Fortunately, through a lot of hard work, there has been a marked improvement during the last 12 months and the backlog has been reduced considerably. However, this is also due to a massive reduction in applications.

Why? Companies find the New Zealand regulatory process too unpredictable and time-consuming given our geography and potential market size. This is a major concern. **New Zealand has fallen well behind other western nations in its access to the best, proven and most effective OTC medicines.**

A worrying number of former industry participants (including some substantial manufacturers and distributors) are leaving New Zealand completely or retreating to Australia, Singapore and mainland USA. Product availability is declining, and some former major brands are now being handled by third-party distributors.

**These multinationals are choosing not to launch new brands in New Zealand altogether, resulting in fewer domestic solutions being available to Kiwis** to treat ailments in comparison with Australians.

Aligning trans-Tasman regulation may also support Kiwi brands launching into a much larger Australian market and further stimulate our local economy.

Continued regulatory delays and unpredictability are a barrier and risk inevitably leading to more companies deciding to close or move their operations offshore.

**Currently, the time taken for regulatory approval of OTC medicines does not reflect well on New Zealand's reputation as a first-world country.**

Many Medsafe regulatory applications cover low-risk medications with international approvals already in place. **There's an opportunity for improved efficiency and effectiveness so new medicines are available to consumers sooner.** More regulatory flexibility is required to accept international approvals.

Trans-Tasman packaging challenges are severely hampering the availability of self-care products. The requirement for distinct packaging impacts the commercial viability of products destined for New Zealand's small market. For decades Medsafe and Australia's Therapeutic Goods

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<sup>12</sup> Castalia report to CHPNZ 2023



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Administration (TGA) have paid lip service to the importance of harmonisation as a platform to allow greater access to safe OTC medicines. Agreement on a few minor packaging changes<sup>13</sup> would lead to products manufactured in Australia becoming much more readily available to Kiwis. Separate medicine registration processes are required, but harmonisation does not exist when two different packages are needed for the same product on either side of the Tasman.

**Why is this so difficult to achieve? After all, what is different about an Australian swallowing a cough and cold medication in Sydney to a New Zealander swallowing the same preparation in Auckland?**

An example of how this can be simply achieved is the 2024 legislative changes which led to cold and flu medicines containing **pseudoephedrine being reclassified from prescription to restricted (pharmacist-only).**

Interestingly, the current law allows New Zealanders to purchase three months supply of OTC medicines in Australia and consume them in New Zealand. CHPNZ contends that consumer should be able to purchase them in New Zealand.

**Again, greater consumer access will lead to improved health outcomes along with much needed savings for other parts of the health sector and for the government's wider consolidated fund.**

Another consequence is that **competition between industry providers leads to lower prices.**

With new prescription and non-prescription medications constantly coming onto the international market. It's important to fast-track scientific health innovations where it is safe and where our western neighbours may already have done so.

**The regulatory system must adapt to respond safely and efficiently to changing health needs and to take advantage of the scientific and technological breakthroughs of the 21st century.**



<sup>13</sup> Medsafe packaging change requirements currently cover such things as the font size on some labelling and references to specific categories of medicine in Australia being different to those in New Zealand.

## OUR PRESCRIPTION: NEW ZEALAND NEEDS TO REMOVE THE BARRIERS TO SELF-CARE

The global evidence and research is clear. New Zealand has an opportunity now to educate and empower its people in self-care for the benefit of all.

Crucially, self-care has unrealised potential to produce better overall health outcomes and relieve some of the pressure on New Zealand's overburdened healthcare sector.

Government, CHPNZ members, pharmacies and especially the regulator need to work collaboratively to enable a higher uptake of self-care as a foundation for better health outcomes.

### What needs to be done?

1. Streamline regulatory approvals to widen access to over the counter (OTC) medicine so the best and safest medicines are available for New Zealanders. One example is harmonised trans-Tasman labelling.
2. Improve **health literacy** to empower more proactive self-care for minor ailments and help to alleviate the pressure on over-strained GPs and EDs.
3. Increase **'pharmacy only and pharmacist only'** medicines so pharmacists can boost their primary care and provide greater access to new and improved OTC medicines.

New Zealanders deserve faster and more efficient regulatory assessment of applications for the latest and safest OTC medications, as well as access to the same self-care medicines as citizens in similar countries.

The current lack of certainty and predictability in regulatory timeframes negatively affects supply logistics and commercial viability, with companies becoming wary of investing in innovative products for New Zealand consumers.

CHPNZ also believes the regulation pendulum has currently swung too far towards the prescription side of the arc. OTC medicines are unduly treated as 'prescription light'.



OTC medicines require a **bespoke regulatory approach** and Medsafe officials acknowledge such a pathway is needed.<sup>14</sup> Low-risk medicines manufactured under high-quality manufacturing processes with appropriately labelled packets should be more widely available for general sale or 'pharmacy only or pharmacist only' sale.

In particular, **high-quality registered low-risk products manufactured in the world-class facilities in Australia should have a simple pathway, through harmonisation, to availability in New Zealand.**

Some exemptions could still need to apply under the New Zealand regulatory process.

International approval from countries such as Canada, Singapore, Australia, England and Ireland with similar safeguards in place could also positively influence and speed up the process.

**There are safe, innovative medicines that are currently available globally, but not to New Zealanders. We need to unlock these potential health dollar savings and get these medicines approved.**

<sup>14</sup> This point was addressed in a December 2024 meeting between Medsafe officials and CHPNZ.





## THE GLOBAL RISE OF SELF-CARE

Self-care, particularly through OTC medicine and advice, is on the global rise and New Zealand is becoming part of this trend. **But together a partnership between industry and government can do more.**

Self-care quality and safety has also grown considerably, particularly coupled with the growth of consumer trust in retail pharmacy and the wider availability of highly effective OTC products.

The Covid 19 pandemic cemented the essential status of the local chemist for community healthcare throughout New Zealand. Even before 2020, the pharmacy's status in self-care and health policy was gaining more prominence within the industry and the public health care system.

**Significantly, governments around the world were recognising what pharmacies and OTC products could do to relieve the pressure on general practice and secondary healthcare, including Emergency Departments.**

The *Self-Care in Europe* study found that **annually around 1.2 billion cases of minor ailments were treated with the use of OTC medicines.** This was calculated as **saving over €36 billion of expenditure that would otherwise be borne by patients, and national health systems.**

It was also estimated that **expanding self-care** for minor ailments could mean an **additional €18 billion a year in savings.**

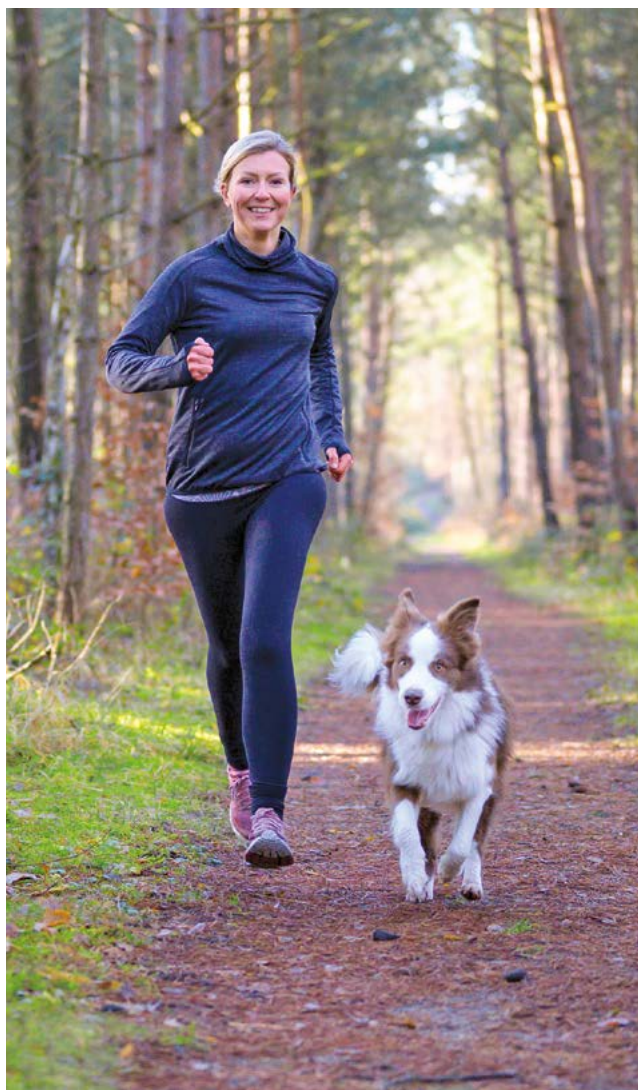
The rise in **self-care has also improved health literacy** and can be an important catalyst **for positive change.** Self-care is the capacity for individuals to find and use information and services to make effective decisions for health and wellbeing.

## THE UNITED KINGDOM

During the past decade, capacity in UK primary care and EDs has been increasingly stretched. Rising patient demand has failed to be matched by available GP appointments.

Patients struggle to access timely in-person or virtual consultations. Each year at least 25 million GP appointments and 5 million ED visits are used for self-treatable illnesses, costing the NHS £1.7 billion.

This is an avoidable cost that is felt across local healthcare systems. Self-care and appropriate use of OTC medicines could free up this resource, helping to relieve capacity in GP surgeries and EDs and allow the healthcare system to reallocate it to patients most in need.



***In the United Kingdom, the value of self-care has increasingly become recognised by national policymakers within Government and NHS England (NHSE).***

In 2023, the UK Government and NHSE published the **Delivery Plan for recovering access to primary care**, incorporating numerous England-wide measures to address concerns about primary care capacity following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Working together, the plan included new programmes and initiatives aimed at supporting effective self-care for self-treatable conditions.

Of particular note, these initiatives aimed to:

- Make better use of community pharmacies (by enabling faster access to medicines for seven minor conditions that previously required prescriptions).
- **Widen access to OTC medicines** (through reclassification of medicines from prescription to available in a pharmacy).
- **Upskill primary care staff** (so practice staff can direct patients towards the most appropriate setting for their condition).

These national-level initiatives set out a framework to encourage and enable the public to access the right care, in the right place and at the right time to ensure the sustainability of the NHS and, in particular, primary care.

**New Zealand could establish a similar framework. Like the UK, New Zealand has both a pressing need and an opportunity for self-care initiatives to unlock the potential for improved public health and reduce pressure on the public purse.**

It is important to be clear that self-care literacy won't happen overnight and requires longer term collaboration and patient education efforts.

In 2023, UK research by the consumer healthcare association PAGB<sup>15</sup> found that two in five adults (39 per cent) requested a GP appointment for common health conditions including colds, a blocked nose, insect bites and stings and headaches; with 8% of people visiting EDs for conditions such as dandruff, acne, head lice, and other non-urgent and relatively minor health conditions.

<sup>15</sup> The Economic Impact of Over-The-Counter Medicines in the UK: Report for PAGB, the consumer healthcare association 09 June 2023

## GLOBAL SNAPSHOT

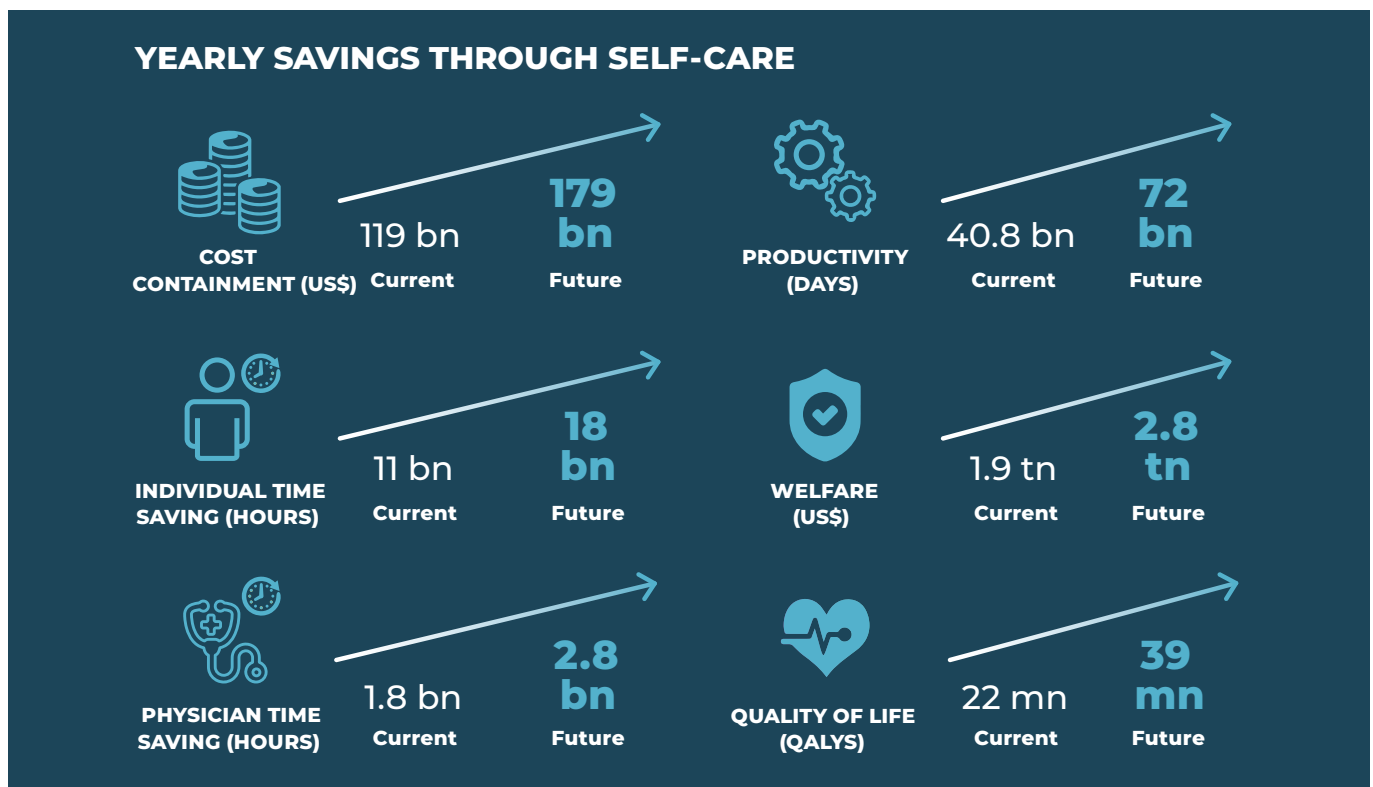
This potential is also true across the world, particularly in western nations.

A global snapshot of self-care was produced by the Global Self-Care Federation in 2023 to highlight the social and economic value world-wide offered by self-care<sup>16</sup>. It was a landmark global study spanning 195 countries that demonstrates the value self-care delivers for individuals, communities and health systems.

The study cited demographic changes (such as the ageing population), medical advances

and political instability as compounding the considerable pressure on healthcare systems. COVID-19 exacerbated the pressure and highlighted how stretched the capacities of national healthcare systems are. The pandemic also emphasised the need to maintain essential health services to individuals through alternative forms of care.

Estimating the savings through self-care as a measure of the social and economic value of self-care, the Federation estimated the following snapshot of annual savings world-wide.



The future savings is predicated on the action needed from regulators, policy and decision makers to harness the benefit of self-care for public health systems, the Federation says.

<sup>16</sup> Economic & Social Value of Self-Care Report | Global Self-Care Federation ([self-carefederation.org](https://self-carefederation.org))





## BENEFITS FOR CONSUMERS AND THE HEALTH SYSTEM

Self-care of minor ailments can be cheaper for consumers than visiting a GP. On average, a GP consultation costs \$50-\$85 and, depending on the location and age of the patient.<sup>17</sup> Also, pharmacies and supermarket aisles are far easier to access for effective treatment of minor issues than securing an appointment at a general practice.

Three main self-care concepts are defined by the Global Self-Care Federation in its Self-Care Socio-Economic Research<sup>18</sup> and all point to positive outcomes for New Zealanders.



<sup>17</sup> GP Appointments, Availability and Costs – MoneyHub NZ

<sup>18</sup> Economic & Social Value of Self-Care Report | Global Self-Care Federation ([self-carefederation.org](http://self-carefederation.org))

## SELF-CARE IS ESSENTIAL AS THE POPULATION ADAPTS AND AGES

Increasing New Zealanders' health literacy and utilising self-care through OTC medications and pharmacy advice in the first instance is not only important now but will be increasingly important in the coming decades.

**New Zealand needs to prepare now for the challenging impact the ageing population will have on an already stretched primary care system.**

In advance of this population evolution, government and industry actions, and policy support, are vital. The more that is accomplished with health literacy now, the better prepared our health system will be.

Informed citizens can play a critical role in contributing to the overall health of the population. Individuals who understand what helps them to achieve or maintain good health, who act to address minor illnesses promptly, and seek help from healthcare services when necessary, are likely to live healthier and longer lives.

**Health-aware people are also likely to achieve better outcomes from health services when they need to use them.**

**Those who are health-aware and actively taking care of their own health, including that of their families, also reduce demand on primary care services – facilitating appropriate use of resources for patients with significant needs.**

This equates to a healthy population.



19

Research by the UK consumer health association PAGB<sup>20</sup> found that **education is key** to increasing self-care, with four in five (83%) of those surveyed saying **we need more education to encourage people to take a more proactive approach.**

The research also found that two in five adults (39%) requested a GP appointment for common health conditions including colds, a blocked nose, insect bites and stings, and headaches; with 8% of people visiting EDs for conditions such as dandruff, acne, head lice and other non-urgent and relatively minor health conditions.

GP visits are free in the UK, but the NHS some time ago instigated a list of ailments for which OTC medicines are more appropriate than prescriptions.<sup>21</sup> These are listed in the appendix.

The use of OTC medications is a simple and highly effective way to treat patients and **significantly reduce pressure on New Zealand's GPs and Eds.** Safety mechanisms available through the expertise of primary healthcare professionals and our world-class regulator.

CHPNZ advocates for primary healthcare resources to be consistently and readily available to the community through the pharmacy network, and for greater utilisation of OTC medicines. This would be **a more cost-effective delivery of primary health and more affordability for people needing healthcare and advice.**

Unfortunately **OTC manufacturers and distributors are currently considering leaving New Zealand** because of application delays and market uncertainty. This is also impacting product development and innovation, as well as the cost benefits that accrue from healthy market competition.

<sup>19</sup> UK NHS self-care poster example of education undertaken to reduce GP and ED visits for common illnesses and supported by **PAGB\_Supporting-self-care-An-ICS-best-practice-compendium.pdf** Note this also supports the AMR supposition that most common illnesses don't need antibiotics.

<sup>20</sup> The Economic Impact of Over-The-Counter Medicines in the UK: Report for PAGB, the consumer healthcare association 09 June 2023

<sup>21</sup> The 2018 guidance 'Conditions for which over-the-counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care' defines conditions that are suitable for treatment via self-care and with products that can be purchased over-the-counter.



## LIST OF SELF-CARE AILMENTS:

- Minor conditions suitable for self-care
- Mild Irritant Dermatitis
- Dandruff
- Diarrhoea (Adults)
- Dry Eyes/Sore (Tired) Eyes
- Earwax
- Excessive Sweating (Hyperhidrosis)
- Head Lice
- Indigestion and Heartburn
- Infrequent Constipation
- Infrequent Migraine
- Insect Bites and Stings
- Mild Acne
- Mild Dry Skin
- Sunburn
- Sun Protection
- Hay Fever/Seasonal Rhinitis
- Minor Burns and Scalds
- Mild General Aches and Pains
- Mouth Ulcers
- Nappy Rash
- Oral Thrush
- Prevention of Dental Caries
- Ringworm/Athletes Foot/ Fungal Nail Infection
- Teething/Mild Toothache
- Threadworms
- Travel Sickness
- Warts and Verrucae

## TOP 10 COMMON SELF-TREATABLE CONDITIONS



The top ten common self-treatable conditions consumers experienced in the last 12 months:



1. Colds

**52%**



2. Headache

**47%**



3. Coughs

**45%**



4. Blocked nose

**44%**



5. Backache

**41%**



6. Sore throat

**33%**

7. Bruises

**30%**

8. Diarrhoea

**27%**

9. Hay fever and allergies

**26%**

10. Heartburn and indigestion

**25%**

from **The Self-Care Census 2024: PAGB**



## WHAT IS CHPNZ?

**The Consumer Healthcare Products Association New Zealand (CHPNZ)** is New Zealand's peak body membership organisation for suppliers of non-prescription medicines and natural health products.

It represents manufacturers, exporters and distributors of non-prescription healthcare products that help New Zealanders look after their own and their families' health through informed, responsible self-medication.

Nationally our members are **responsible for an estimated 80% of the total sales of these essential products** making CHPNZ the pre-eminent voice of the consumer self-care industry.

**New Zealand can again be among the world's best health providers.**

The CHPNZ works alongside the aligned industry leaders and trade organisations that help manage the local primary healthcare sector. Importantly, we also have close working relationships with the equivalent international organisations in Australia, USA, Canada, UK and Europe.

Significantly, CHPNZ's chief executive serves as a key board member of the highly influential Global Self-Care Federation, which is **currently working with the World Health Organisation (WHO) on a global resolution on the value of self-care.**

This partnership will play a vital part in gathering additional research **including our**

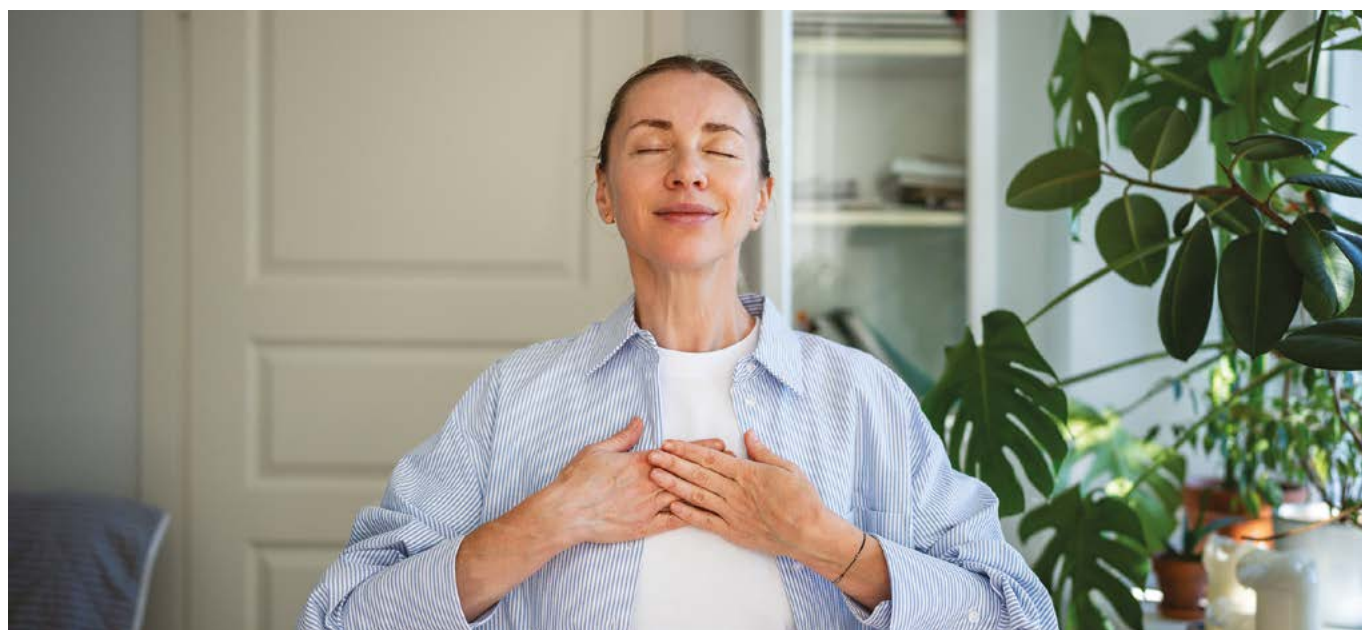
**nation's own statistics, resulting in the favouring of greater self-care and access to over-the-counter (OTC) medicines.**

At home, CHPNZ works closely with Medsafe, Medicines New Zealand, Medical Technology Association of New Zealand, and Natural Health Products New Zealand. CHPNZ has a Regulatory and Technical division that meets formally with Medsafe and submits regularly on any proposed legislation, particularly as it relates to non-prescription medicines.

In addition to providing essential healthcare products, our members **contribute significantly to the national economy** and cater for the burgeoning self-care sector, **easing the burden on public health resources.**

In recent years GPs, EDs and others in primary healthcare have experienced increasing pressure. **Contributing significantly to this pressure has been a tendency for the regulator to favour prescription-only applications over those from OTC applicants.** This has led to more doctor visits being required when alternatives could be available without prescription and the associated cost.

**The current situation means less consumer choice and safe access denied to a wider range of effective medicines afforded to other western economies.**





## **CONTACT**

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