

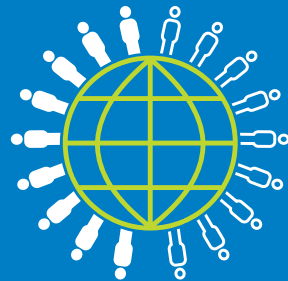


# Self-Care for a Sustainable Australian Healthcare System



## Understanding Self-Care

- Self-care is the practice of individuals managing their health using the knowledge and information available to them.<sup>1</sup>
- It's a decision-making process empowering individuals to efficiently manage their health, with or without the support of healthcare professionals (HCPs) and allied health.<sup>12</sup>
- Self-care interventions are evidence-based tools supporting self-care, accessible fully or partially outside formal health services (e.g., medicines, counselling, diagnostics, digital technologies).<sup>2</sup>



- With almost half of the world's population<sup>3</sup> lacking access to essential health services, the **WHO recommends self-care interventions for every country, as a critical path to reach universal health coverage, promote health and serve the vulnerable.**<sup>2</sup>

## The 7 Pillars of Self-Care<sup>4</sup>



## Building a path to better health through self-care<sup>5</sup>

**Self-care – through screening, early detection, risk reduction, early intervention, collaborative relationships with HCPs, – enables Australians to live well and improve their health outcomes.**

### Key components for optimal self care:<sup>5</sup>



**Access** – to self-care support no matter where an individual lives



**A National self-care strategy** – to influence change and ensure evidence-based practices & resources for communities



**Services working together** – coordinated and collaborative health services



**Low-cost** – cost-effective care & flexible funding models that lessens the money Australians spend



**Healthcare workers** – providing advice & individualised support using training in self-care



**E-health technologies** – that give Australians 24/7 access to reliable, accurate information

SOURCE: The Self-Care Alliance Charter



**Self-care is the ability of individuals, families, and communities to promote health, prevent disease, and maintain health and to cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a health-care provider.**

- World Health Organization (WHO), Definition of Self-Care, 2013

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## The role of self-care in modernising Australia's healthcare system

- ❖ Effective self-care involves a collaboration between individuals, healthcare systems and services.<sup>6</sup>
- ❖ Growing populations, demographic shifts, chronic condition management, climate change, and rising infectious disease risks have increased Australians' need for healthcare access.
- ❖ Australians require preventative care options and health knowledge to expedite recovery when medical issues arise.

Rising chronic disease burdens and healthcare costs, along with value-based payments and innovative care models, are shifting focus from expensive specialized care to high-value self-care, supported by information technology, social support, and clinical expertise.<sup>7</sup>

## The self-care opportunity<sup>8</sup>

Australian research uncovered opportunities to foster greater consumer engagement and empowerment in health. Knowing where to find, interpret and use information and health services to make effective decisions has never been more important.



of Australians want to improve their skills and knowledge so they can be more engaged in the management of their health



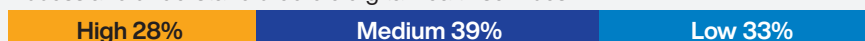
Yet, less than 2 in 5, or 37% have high confidence they have the skills and knowledge to engage in actions to prevent illness

### How confident are Australians that they have the skills and knowledge to:

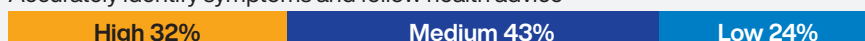
Engage in actions to prevent illness



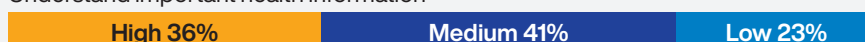
Access and understand credible digital health services



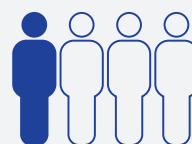
Accurately identify symptoms and follow health advice



Understand important health information



### How informed do Australians think they are when it comes to health matters?



More than 1 in 4 (27%) believe they **don't have the information or skills needed** to self-manage common health conditions.



For those going online before seeing a GP or pharmacist, **only 9% fully understand the health information** they find.

## Improving health outcomes and the value of integrated care

- ❖ Self-care is a cost-effective approach that can reduce disease burden and alleviate pressure on national health systems from preventable health conditions.<sup>7</sup>
- ❖ Increased self-care activity has shown improved clinical indicators, symptom management, hospital admissions for those with cardiovascular disease, hypertension, cerebrovascular disease, and diabetes.<sup>7</sup>
- ❖ Health systems with strong integrated primary care improve patient outcomes and efficiently deliver high-quality appropriate services.<sup>10</sup>
- ❖ Integrated care is part of the solution to the rising demand for healthcare services.<sup>10</sup>

Up to **80%** of heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes, and over a third of cancers could be prevented through evidence-based self-care

By 2025, an estimated **29,300** Australians could be saved through the effect prevention of chronic disease



## The value of health literacy

- ✦ Health literacy is the ability to find, comprehend, and apply healthcare information and services to individual situations.<sup>1</sup>
- ✦ Good health literacy enables informed decisions on preventing and treating minor ailments and chronic diseases.
- ✦ Increasing the ability of Australians to undertake self-care is dependent on raising levels of health literacy in the population, particularly amongst those most at risk of poor health.<sup>12</sup>

Australians with Poor Health Literacy are

# 1.5-3

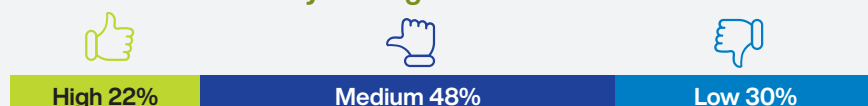
times likely to experience an adverse event<sup>8</sup> and can draw additional costs equivalent to (approximately)

# 3-5%

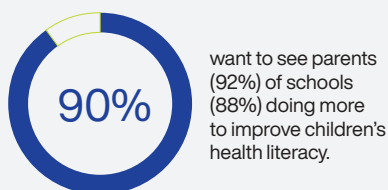
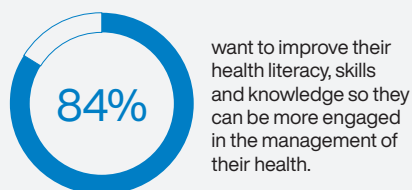
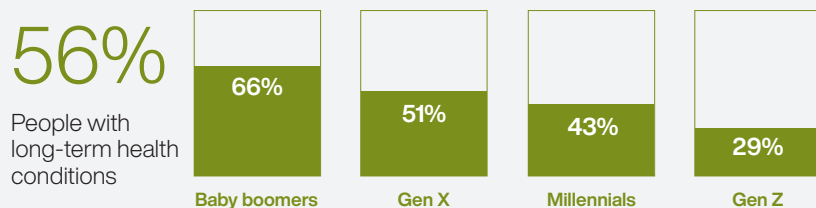
of total healthcare spending

## Improving health literacy is a priority for Australians

When it comes to health literacy just one in five Australians (22%) rate their health literacy at a high level:



### Who feels the most engaged with self-care and health literacy



## Responsible use of medicines

- ✦ Globally, self-responsible use of non-prescription medicines (self-medication) is a crucial self-care intervention, allowing individuals to manage treatable conditions without visiting an HCP or Emergency department.<sup>13</sup>
- ✦ In low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), self-medication may contribute to a reduction in healthcare disparities by offering low-threshold access to healthcare - without major disruptions to daily routines.<sup>13</sup>
- ✦ Pharmacists are well-positioned to facilitate self-care and appropriate self-medication processes<sup>13</sup>, helping to shift costs from more costly healthcare settings.<sup>10</sup>



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## Economic benefits of self-care

In Australia, maximising self-care could potentially save \$1,300-\$7,515 per hospital patient, per year, and significantly lower hospital readmission rates.

- ✦ Although Australia boasts a commendable healthcare system, there is still scope for enhancement.
- ✦ Healthcare costs have risen fourfold over the last 25 years<sup>10</sup>, while limited resources constrain the system.
- ✦ Short-term investments in self-care yield long-term savings for governments and healthcare industries, while improving health outcomes.<sup>1</sup>
- ✦ Self-care eases the strain on healthcare systems allowing more efficient and effective resource allocation.<sup>1</sup>

Each year in Australia,

# \$511M-\$1.67B

is spent on unnecessary visits to EDs and GPs for self-treatable conditions and minor ailments

Approximately

# 2.9-11.5%

# 7-21.2%

of ED services and

of GP services can be safely transferred to pharmacy in Australia



## Unique healthcare needs of CALD communities<sup>15</sup>

- ✦ People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds face greater challenges when navigating the healthcare system.
- ✦ Language and cultural barriers, lower health literacy, and navigating an unfamiliar system increase their risk of poorer healthcare quality and outcomes compared with other Australians.
- ✦ Misinformation and lack of language-specific health information can deter CALD groups from utilising health services and screenings.
- ✦ The Sydney Health Literacy Lab ([www.sydneyhealthliteracylab.org.au](http://www.sydneyhealthliteracylab.org.au)) pioneers health literacy research and solutions, promoting inclusivity in healthcare settings.<sup>16</sup>
- ✦ Findings from the Health Literacy Lab, offer crucial guidance for HCPs, industry, and the broader Australian health system, vital for ensuring widespread adoption of self-care.

			
Failing to understand medication instructions	Inability to read prescription labels	Worse post-operative pain management	Lower uptake of vaccines

## Resources

-  Decision-making among CALD adults with chronic kidney disease (CKD) on haemodialysis
-  Implications for GP endorsement of a diabetes app with patients from CALD: a qualitative study
-  Embedding health literacy research and best practice within a socio-economically and culturally diverse health service
-  Assessing health literacy among adult outpatients attending allied health clinics in Western Sydney
-  Main COVID-19 information sources in a CALD community in Sydney: A cross-sectional survey
-  Comparison of reported main COVID-19 information sources in national and CALD communities in Australia
-  Psychological, social and financial impacts of COVID-19 on culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Sydney

# Individual benefits of self-care

- ✦ Self-care enables better choice and care, motivating individuals to improve their quality of life by accessing readily available healthcare.<sup>1</sup>
- ✦ It saves time and effort, allowing them to independently and effectively manage various health conditions.
- ✦ It's essential for preventing certain conditions and expediting recovery where total prevention fails, making it crucial for well-being throughout life.

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