



## **Bangkok Joint Initiative on Self-Care of Medical Products: Enhancing Well-Being in the Asia-Pacific Region**

### **Preamble**

This Initiative aims to position self-care of medical products as a cornerstone in promoting increased access to health and well-being across the Asia-Pacific region, aligning with global efforts on these critical issues.

### **Recognizing:**

- The importance of self-care, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), as a fundamental pillar of health and well-being.
- The pivotal role of health literacy in improving individual and public health.
- The growing evidence showing that self-care empowers individuals to actively manage their health and prevent diseases, leading to improved outcomes and quality of life.
- The exacerbation of inequities within and between countries due to the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and conflicts, necessitating robust community health services and social participation to address these challenges.

### **Acknowledging:**

- The principles enshrined in the WHO Constitution and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) highlight the fundamental right to health and the need for participatory approaches to health governance.
- The necessity of strengthening primary healthcare systems through enabling and health-conducive environments in which individuals and communities are empowered and engaged in maintaining and enhancing their health and well-being.

**Hereby to, within the scope of role and responsibility of each Self-CARER Member Organizations and APSMI Member Associations participating in this initiative:**





1. **Promote Self-Care medical product for improved health literacy:** We emphasize the importance of self-care in enhancing health literacy. By integrating self-care practices into all levels of healthcare medical product systems, particularly primary care, individuals can gain the knowledge and skills necessary to make informed health decisions, ultimately reducing the burden on healthcare providers and systems
2. **Leverage Technology and Digital Solutions:** We acknowledge the potential of digital technologies to enhance self-care medical product interventions, including aiding individuals in recognizing when professional healthcare intervention is necessary, promoting health, and making informed health decisions.
3. **Strengthen Collaboration and Public-Private Partnerships:** We recognize the need for multi-sectoral collaboration to advance self-care and enhance policy and practice. Public-private partnerships can reduce costs to governments by sharing resources, expertise, and best practices, accelerating progress in self-care implementation and improving health outcomes globally. Effective regulatory frameworks will support access to self-care medical products based on appropriate safety, efficacy, and quality standards.
4. **Ensure Equity and Inclusivity:** We confirm to equitable access to self-care interventions, ensuring no one is left behind. Addressing social determinants of health and gender inequalities, we aim to eliminate barriers to self-care medical product, fostering inclusive policies that empower individuals to exercise their right to self-care and alleviate the burden to healthcare systems.
5. **Advocate for Better Self-Care Governance:** We recognize WHO's focus on promoting self-care and call for the adoption of a WHO Resolution on Self-Care for Health. This will provide a comprehensive framework for governments, stakeholders, and the international community to strengthen self-care policies and interventions. We encourage to work together to integrate self-care into health systems for better health, well-being, and sustainable development.





**Conclusion**

This Bangkok Joint Initiative on Self-Care Medical Product for Health and Well-Being signifies our collective efforts to advancing self-care medical product as a fundamental component of health systems across the Asia-Pacific region, ensuring health and well-being for all.

**We, representatives of governments, national regulatory authorities, nongovernmental organizations, members of the United for Self-Care Coalition (the Coalition), and private sector, gathered here today, recognizing the importance of self-care as a fundamental pillar of health and well-being, affirm our dedication to advancing self-care as an essential component of Universal Health Coverage.**

**Agreed in Bangkok, Thailand in English on November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024.**

**Self-CARER Member Organizations:**

**We support this initiative within the purview of our respective organizations. PMDA (Japan), Thai-FDA (Thailand), TFDA (Chinese Taipei), HSA (Singapore), MFDS (Korea), MOH & BPOM (Indonesia), MOH & DAV (Vietnam), NPRA (Malaysia), PFDA(Philippines)**

**APSMI Member Associations:**

**JSMI & JFSMI (Japan), TSMIA (Thailand), TSCIA (Chinese Taipei), KPBMA (Korea), GP Farmasi (Indonesia), CHAP (Philippines), Am-Cham Vietnam (Vietnam), APSMI Malaysia (Malaysia)**





## Background context

Self-care refers to the actions individuals take for themselves to establish and maintain health, prevent and deal with illness, and manage minor ailments and long-term conditions. It includes hygiene, nutrition, lifestyle, environmental factors, and self-medication.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the relevance of self-care became more apparent as healthcare systems worldwide were overwhelmed. People had to manage their own health, from maintaining hygiene to using telemedicine services, significantly reducing the burden on healthcare providers and systems.

In a joint statement issued in 2023 by the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the World Bank, these entities emphasized that as we approach the halfway mark of the 15-year Sustainable Development Goals period, innovative solutions, like self-care interventions, are crucial. Self-care interventions are recommended by WHO for all countries and economic settings as essential tools to improve primary health care, increase access to health, ensure global safety, and support vulnerable populations.<sup>[1]</sup>

In this sense, the Global Self-Care Federation (GSCF) has been actively seeking to leverage the social and economic value of self-care for countries. An example of this effort is the São Paulo Declaration on Self-Care, adopted last year by Ministers of Health of the Latin American region. This declaration has been a monumental step in making self-care a health movement both regionally and globally. It emphasizes the importance of self-care in achieving better health outcomes and reducing healthcare costs.

As a next step, given the approval of the Resolution on Social Participation for Universal Health Coverage (UHC), Health, and Well-Being at the Seventy-Seventh World Health Assembly (WHA77) and its intrinsic connection to self-care and informed self-management, there is a pressing need to continue to strengthen these concepts within the Asia-Pacific region. This region is facing significant demographic shifts, including a rapidly aging population, a high prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and a low number of doctors.





By 2050, one in four people in Asia and the Pacific will be over 60 years old, significantly increasing the need for health and social services <sup>[2]</sup>. Additionally, NCDs are the pivotal cause of disease burden and mortality in the Asia Pacific region, claiming 55% of total life in the Southeast Asia region each year and 75% in the Western Pacific region<sup>[3]</sup>. Finally, across lower-middle- and low-income Asia-Pacific countries and territories, there are 1.1 doctors per 1000 population, whereas a higher number of doctors – 1.6 per 1000 population – is reported in upper-middle-income countries and territories<sup>[4]</sup>. Both numbers are below the OECD average and point to the pressing need for self-care policies to be adopted to ease pressure on healthcare systems.

In this context, the Bangkok joint initiative on Self-care aims to align self-care with the global health agenda to empower individuals and communities through enhanced health literacy and increased data-driven decisions, improving health outcomes and ensuring sustainable healthcare systems.

<sup>[1]</sup> HRP, WHO, UNDP, UNFPA, & World Bank. (2023). *Self-care interventions for sexual and reproductive health and rights to advance universal health coverage: 2023 Joint statement by HRP, WHO, UNDP, UNFPA and the World Bank*. World Health Organization. <https://doi.org/10.22617/SGP240253-3>

<sup>[2]</sup> Asian Development Bank. (2024). *Aging Well in Asia: Asian Development Policy Report 2024*. Asian Development Bank. <https://doi.org/10.22617/SGP240253-3>

<sup>[3]</sup> Low, WY., Lee, YK. & Samy, A.L. Non-communicable diseases in the Asia-Pacific region: Prevalence, risk factors and community-based prevention. *IJOMEH* (2014). <https://doi.org/10.2478/s13382-014-0326-0>

<sup>[4]</sup> OECD/WHO (2022), *Health at a Glance: Asia/Pacific 2022: Measuring Progress Towards Universal Health Coverage*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/c7467f62-en>.

