

Code of Ethics 2020



GLOBAL
SELF-CARE
FEDERATION

Global Self-Care Federation

Code of Ethics

INTRODUCTION: THE ROLE OF SELF-CARE

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines self-care as:

“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-care provider”.¹

Self-care involves:

- Making healthy lifestyle choices—being physically active and eating healthily
- Avoiding unhealthy lifestyle habits—avoiding smoking and excessive alcohol consumption
- Making responsible use of self-care products including non-prescription medicines
- Self-recognition of symptoms—assessing and addressing symptoms, in partnership with a healthcare professional where necessary
- Self-monitoring—checking for signs of deterioration or improvement
- Self-management—managing symptoms of disease, either alone, in partnership with healthcare professionals, or with support from other people with the same health condition

The benefits of self-care are threefold:

Better choice: Self-care gives people greater availability of effective healthcare. It saves individuals time and effort, by allowing them to manage many health conditions conveniently and successfully by themselves. It lets individuals address basic needs without the complications and added effort of going to see a doctor.

Better care: Self-care empowers people to take their health and wellbeing into their own hands, giving them the incentive to improve their quality of life. It plays a key role in the prevention of certain conditions and improves treatment and recovery times where total prevention fails. It is a critical part of well-being at all stages of life.

Better value: Self-care plays an important role in the drive toward in helping countries achieve Universal Health Coverage by helping to combat rising healthcare costs around the world. Short-term investments in self-care lead to demonstrable long-term savings for governments and healthcare systems as well as improvements in productivity of individuals, resulting in positive economic benefits to the individual and to the broader economy. Self-care eases the workload of strained healthcare systems by enabling them to allocate resources more efficiently and effectively.

¹ <https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/self-care-interventions/questions-answers-self-care.pdf?ua=1>

PREAMBLE

- i. The Global Self-Care Federation (“GSCF”) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization representing regional and national associations, as well as manufacturers and distributors of non-prescription medicines and other licensed or evidence-based self-care products (“Our Organizations”). GSCF supports the development of industry associations around the world to aid in the understanding and advancement of responsible self-care and self-medication. Companies in the self-care industry research, manufacture, and distribute self-care products, including non-prescription medicines and services (“Our Products”) intended and labelled for use without medical supervision.
- ii. The self-care industry operates in many jurisdictions, each with established frameworks of regulatory and/or legal controls.
- iii. Consumers are made aware of self-care products via direct advertising and promotion, education and other means. Consumers purchase self-care products that are available in pharmacies and, in many countries around the world, in other retail outlets, including on-line channels.
- iv. Recognizing that properly engaging consumers is essential to the safe use of Our Products, GSCF currently encourages member associations to develop voluntary codes of advertising practice and supports truthful labelling.
- v. Several key factors are shaping the future of the self-care industry. The global population is ageing with an ever-greater need for better chronic disease management. At the same time, the consumer journey is rapidly evolving, impacting how individuals interact with healthcare providers and buy self-care products. In an omni-channel world, people want convenient, transparent and affordable options at their fingertips. The explosion in data-driven solutions also means that individuals have come to expect holistic, personalised solutions tailored to address their self-care needs.
- vi. As GSCF and the industry seek to engage with WHO, governments; non-governmental organizations; other industries; healthcare professionals; and consumers to achieve better health outcomes for individuals around the world, it is essential that the Industry encourage members and non-members alike to operate in an ethical and transparent manner.
- vii. Trust is earned and retained over time as GSCF and the self-care industry operate in a responsible manner. Thus, GSCF and its members are establishing a set of principles of behaviour that go beyond existing voluntary codes of advertising practice and consumer-friendly labelling and reach key aspects of our business ethics. These principles are delineated in this Code of Ethics
- viii. This Code of Ethics will be promoted to members of GSCF and shared with its stakeholders and partners as a demonstration of its commitment to ethical and transparent behaviour
- ix. This Code of Ethics does not replace any national laws, regulations, or codes that may contain stricter requirements (for example: government ethics rules).

PRINCIPLES

GSCF and its members are committed to contributing to the overall health, safety, and well-being of consumers worldwide by:

- I. **Engaging consumers in an ethical manner that empowers them to make better self-care choices to improve the health and lives of themselves and their families**
 - A. The information we provide to consumers through the marketing of Our Products—via approved labelling; advertising and promotion; education; or other means—must be current, accurate, supported by data and not misleading.
 - B. The information we provide consumers must be based on the latest science with the objective of encouraging the responsible and safe use of Our Products.

- II. **Collaborating with other stakeholders—WHO; governments; non-governmental organizations; other industries; and healthcare professionals—to advance the practice of self-care and self-medication**
 - A. Engagements with stakeholders will focus on improving the overall health and well-being of consumers around the world.
 - B. Engagements with stakeholders will be ethical and transparent, adhering both to local laws and to international standards. In addition, the independence of these organizations will be respected. Neither GSCF nor its members will knowingly engage with the tobacco industry or other stakeholders that work to further the interests of the tobacco industry. We also do not engage with the arms industry.²
 - C. The information we provide to healthcare professionals and their representative organizations will be substantiated either by reference to the approved labelling and, where appropriate, by scientific evidence with the objective of supporting the responsible and safe use of Our Products.
 - D. The information we provide to other stakeholders, whether through promotion or other means, will be based on the latest science with the objective of encouraging the responsible and safe use of Our Products.
 - E. Promotion to healthcare practitioners, including pharmacists and pharmacy staff should not unduly influence product recommendations to consumers based on financial interests. Such promotion should recommend products to consumers based on healthcare needs and follow the country Anti-bribery or commercial bribery laws and regulations.

- III. **Cooperating with regulatory agencies to ensure the health and well-being of consumers as they safely use Our Products**
 - A. As we represent Our Products or positions to regulatory agencies, we will present all the relevant facts in an ethical, transparent, and balanced manner
 - B. We will responsibly monitor the use of Our Products and will be forthcoming to relevant regulatory agencies when we identify issues associated with Our Products that affect the health or safety of consumers.
 - C. When contacted by a regulatory agency, we will be timely, forthright, and cooperative in providing thorough and balanced responses, seeking first and foremost to protect the health and safety of consumers through a scientific and evidence-based dialogue.

² As an official observer of WHO, GSCF acknowledges the importance of not engaging with any person or organization associated with the tobacco or arms industry

- D. We will work to uphold the credibility and authority of regulatory agencies and encourage the fair and balanced application of their enforcement mandate, including a willingness by the agencies to give fair consideration to science-based challenges.

IV. **Leading by example to encourage the entire self-care industry, members and non-members alike, to conduct business in a manner that is consistent with the principles expressed herein**

- A. We will market Our Products and operate Our Organizations in a highly ethical manner—fair, honest and transparent, accountable to the laws of the jurisdictions in which we operate and to standards of international business practices, including accepted conflict of interest, anti-trust and anti-bribery practices. *(Statements on these policies are available upon request.)*
- B. We will support at the jurisdiction level the development of frameworks of regulatory and/or legal controls that appropriately regulate Our Products, focusing on giving consumers the tools to safely practice self-care and self-medication, while allowing for the development of innovative self-care products and services. These frameworks should at a minimum meet the principles established herein and include mechanisms to monitor for, identify and appropriately sanction unethical behaviour. In the absence of such frameworks, we encourage our members to work at the jurisdiction-level on the creation of voluntary codes of conduct that both prescribe the principles of behaviour described herein and create self-imposed mechanisms to monitor for, identify, and appropriately sanction bad behaviour.
- C. Members, themselves shall establish and maintain appropriate procedures to ensure compliance with relevant codes and applicable laws and regulations, reviewing and monitoring all of their activities in that regard.
- D. Recognising the global commitment to end extreme poverty, reduce inequality and protect the planet by 2030, we will work to incorporate global sustainability goals into our business practices.³

³GSCF has an ongoing effort to incorporate the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals into its practices.



IMPLEMENTATION

Much of the responsibility for implementing this Code of Ethics is beyond the scope of a global trade association and lies at the jurisdiction level with our member organizations—regional and national associations, as well as manufacturers and distributors of non-prescription medicines and other self-care products. However, at a global level GSCF does maintain certain responsibilities for implementing the principles of this Code as a means of maintaining or increasing trust among stakeholders. GSCF will:

1. Support Jurisdiction-level Execution

GSCF will function as a facilitator for the development of effective frameworks of regulatory and/or legal controls and jurisdiction-level codes of conduct to govern self-care products and services. This will include the cataloguing of best practice examples from around the world and the education of members as to what standards comprise effective frameworks.

2. Measure and Report Impact

Although many of the principles delineated herein do not lend themselves to direct measurement at the global level, GSCF is committed to measuring and reporting on progress the industry makes toward developing frameworks of: a) regulatory and/or legal controls, and/or, b) jurisdiction-level Codes of Ethics that meet the principles described herein. In addition, GSCF will conduct periodic surveys of stakeholders and consumers to measure trust in the industry. It will both publicly report the results of these surveys and utilize the results to modify the Code of Ethics. Member adherence to GSCF's Anti-Trust, Anti-Bribery and COI policies will be monitored on an annual basis

3. Inform Global Stakeholders

GSCF will continue to communicate to our stakeholders and the wider community about our commitment to adhering to the principles outlined herein and to implementing the Code at a global, regional and local level. And, as GSCF measures progress toward achieving the principles described herein, it will incorporate these metrics.

SIGNATURE

List of members signing on to this Code of Ethics:

- Asia-Pacific Self-Medication Industry (APSMI)
- Asociación de Fabricantes de Medicamentos de Libre Acceso AC (AFAMELA)
- Associação Brasileira da Indústria de Medicamentos Isentos de Prescrição (ABIMIP)
- Association of the European Self-Care Industry (AESGP)
- Bayer, Consumer Health Division
- Cámara Argentina de Productores de Especialidades (CAPEMVeL)
- Cámara de la Industria Farmacéutica. Asociación Nacional de Empresarios de Colombia (ANDI)
- China Nonprescription Medicines Association (CNMA)
- Consumer Health Products Canada (CHP Canada)
- Consumer Health Products, Australia
- Consumer Healthcare Products Association (CHPA)
- GSK Consumer Healthcare
- Industria Latinoamericana de Autocuidado Responsable (ILAR)
- Israel Association of Non-Prescription Medicine (TELEM)
- Japan Self-Medication Industry (JSMI)
- Johnson & Johnson Consumer Health
- Kenyan Association of the Pharmaceutical Industry (KAPI)
- Kowa Company, Ltd
- Middle-East, North Africa and Pakistan Self-Medication Industry (MENAP-SMI)
- New Zealand Self-Medication Industry Association (NZSMI)
- Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers of India
- Pengurus Pusat Gabungan Perusahaan Farmasi Indonesia (GP Farmasi)
- Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP)
- Pharmaceutical Association of Malaysia (PhAMA)
- Procter & Gamble Company
- Reckitt Benckiser Group plc
- Sanofi Consumer Healthcare
- Sato Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd
- Self-Care Association of South Africa
- Taisho Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd
- Taiwan Pharmaceutical Marketing & Management Association (TPMMA)
- Tasly Holding Group Co., Ltd
- Thai Self-Medication Industry Association (TSMIA)
- Zeria Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd

Date of adoption: _____