



Self-Care **SOCIO-ECONOMIC RESEARCH**

Regional Summaries: North America



INTRODUCTION

- USA and Canada are large mature markets with a combined population of 373 million.
- USA has one of the most liberal consumer health distribution environments in the world. Canada's well-established pharmacy-based conditions of sale should create an enabling environment for more ambitious switches and preserve the pharmacist's central role in self-medication.
- Self-care simplifies access to OTC medicines and improves consumer knowledge on responsible self-medication and relevant self-care products. Self-care for the management of self-treatable conditions is one of the approaches used to save costs for individuals and national healthcare systems.
- Most self-care policies focus on Rx to OTC switches and health literacy which are seen as a key influential factors of self-care practices.

REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON SELF-CARE PRACTICES

- Self-care for the management of STCs is one of the approaches used to save costs for individuals and national healthcare systems. Self-care simplifies access to OTC medicines and improves consumer knowledge on responsible self-medication and relevant self-care products. Most self-care policies focus on Rx to OTC switches and health literacy.
- Due to an increase in individual autonomy and medical costs, self-care shifted from values of self-reliance and individualism, as well as from treatment of infectious diseases to the management of chronic diseases and STCs.
- Health literacy is seen as a key influential factor of self-care practices in Canada as it promotes good health knowledge and responsible judgment of treatment options [1]. Low health literacy is connected to an increase in unplanned hospital visits, a decrease in the ability







to take part in day-to-day life and lowered medication compliance [2]. If 16% percent of Canadians who rely on their physicians for STCs would practice self-care, an additional 500,000 Canadians would gain access to physicians [3].

- By practicing self-care, a total of \$146 billion can be saved for the healthcare system, ranging from \$95 billion in saved clinical visits to \$52 billion in pharmaceutical expenditure [4]. The availability of OTC medicines allows the population to avoid productivity losses of \$23 billion [5]. If OTC medicines were not available, approximately 450 million additional visits to primary or emergency care would be added to the current 1.2 billion visits, a number approximately equal to 56,000 full-time working physicians per year. Therefore, expanding the OTC market through Rx to OTC switches can help to minimize unnecessary physician visits and reduce the existing shortage of healthcare professionals [5].

REGIONAL RESULTS

There are **two countries** considered in the North America region and both countries are categorized in Country Group A. Of the total OTC expenditure in terms of number of packs in the status quo, 40% are used in the **self-care as the first treatment option (FT)** and 60% are used in the **self-care as the only treatment option (OT)** (Table 1). The total current population of the two Group A countries is approximately 366 million.

Table 1: Current value of self-care in North America

		Group A • 366 mn people • 1,151 mn FT packs • 1,726 mn OT packs
FT	 Cost Containment	\$27,132 mn
	 Individual Time Saving	1,439 mn hours
	 Physician Time Saving	345 mn hours
OT	 Productivity	2,590 mn days
	 Welfare	\$588,717 mn
	 Quality of Life	1,398,384 QALYs

Based on the approximately 1.2 billion OTC packs used in the FT, savings in terms of cost containment is of highest in this region with more than \$27.1 billion in savings generated through current self-care practices.







Currently, the USA and Canada achieve noteworthy savings for all direct and indirect metrics of self-care. Based on the approximately 1.2 billion OTC packs used in the FT, savings in terms of cost containment is of highest in this region with more than \$27.1 billion generated through current self-care practices. Additionally, over 1.4 billion hours are saved in total due to avoided travel, waiting, and consultation time, while 345

million hours are freed up for physicians to attend to people with more complex medical needs.

The results demonstrate that almost 2.6 billion working days are gained through the practice of self-care with OTC products. Additionally, due to the high average incomes per capita in this region, welfare is high amounting to approximately \$600 million.



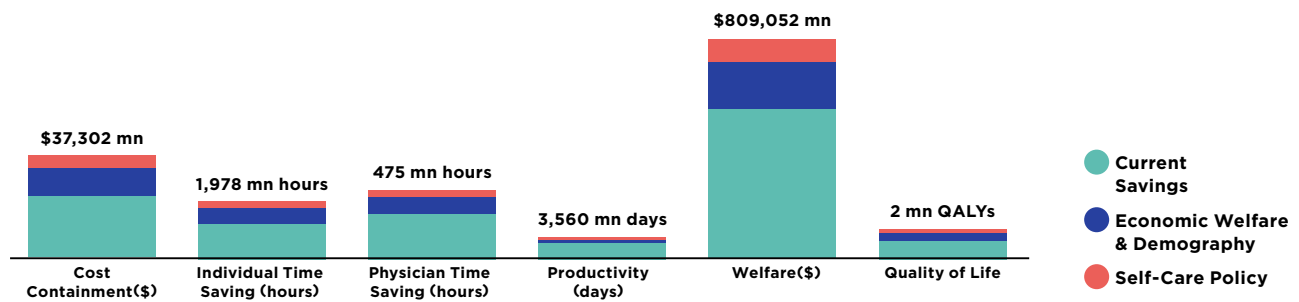
Table 2: Future value of self-care in North America per Country Group

			Group A • 390 mn people • 1,582mn FT packs • 2,373 mn OT packs
FT		Cost Containment	\$37,302 mn
		Individual Time Saving	1,978 mn hours
		Physician Time Saving	475 mn hours
OT		Productivity	3,560 mn days
		Welfare	\$809,052 mn
		Quality of Life	1,922,238 QALYs

Value of self-care in the future potential scenario for North America is summarized by Country Groups in Table 2 and [Figure 1](#) while the overall self-care metrics for this region divided by OTC drivers are highlighted in [Table 1](#). Projections are compared to current values to estimate the extent of influence of the three OTC drivers (namely, demographics, welfare and better self-care policies) on future savings ([Figure 1](#))

The results in Table 2 illustrate the growth potential of this region, which is mainly driven by the high consumption of OTC packs in the FT.

Figure 1: Future value of self-care in North America



Self-care practices continue to demonstrate the potential to increase monetary and time savings and quality of life in North America. Based on cost containment of \$27 billion generated through current self-care practice changes in demographics and economic welfare, and in conjunction with the implementation and further development of self-care policy, self-care practices are expected to increase this value to over \$37 billion in the future. Moreover, through the growth in the number of productive days which may be gained, welfare gains of more than

\$809 billion are projected. Almost two million QALYs will be achieved in the future potential scenario. Focusing on time savings, about two billion hours will be saved by individuals due to the avoidance of unnecessary physician visits through self-care practices while 475 million hours will be saved by physicians, enabling more than 219,000 physicians to be freed up to see people who most need them. Finally, as shown in Table 3, appropriate self-care policies a major drivers for future contributions of 12% across all metrics through self-care.

Table 3: Value of self-care achieved through self-care policy in North America

		Overall impact of self-care		Future value of self-care policies	Future contribution of self-care policies as a driver
		Current	Future		
ET	Cost Containment	\$27.1 bn	\$37.3 bn	\$3.4 bn	+12%
	Individual Time Saving	1.4 bn hours	2.0 bn hours	0.2 bn hours	+12%
	Physician Time Saving	345 mn hours	475 mn hours	43 mn hours	+12%
OT	Productivity	2.6 bn days	3.6 bn days	0.3 bn days	+12%
	Welfare	\$588.7 bn	\$809.1 bn	\$73.6 bn	+12%
	Quality of Life	1.4 mn QALYs	1.9 mn QALYs	0.2 mn QALYs	+12%

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Increase health literacy levels though investing in empowering individuals to take decisions about their health and well-being with a prominent role for pharmacists**
- **Regulatory and policy frameworks encourage more Rx to OTC switches**
- **Regulate for a digital environment to maximize benefits of self-care**

REFERENCES

1. Food, Health and Consumer Products of Canada. Canadians' Strong Health Literacy Scores Tied to Good Health Status, But Navigating Health System Remains a Challenge. [Internet]. News Releases. 2017 [cited 2021 Sep 3]. Available from: <https://www.chpcanada.ca/news-release/canadians-strong-health-literacy-scores-tied-good-health-status-navigating/>
2. Sun W, Doran DM, Wodchis WP, Peter E. Examining the relationship between therapeutic self-care and adverse events for home care clients in Ontario, Canada: a retrospective cohort study. BMC Health Serv Res. 2017 Dec;17(1):206.
3. Food, Health and Consumer Products of Canada. Digital transformation of self-care [Internet]. 2021. Available from: [https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cb-bc.nsf/vwapj/Submission-04547-FoodHealthConsumerProductsCanada.pdf/\\$file/Submission-04547-FoodHealthConsumerProductsCanada.pdf](https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cb-bc.nsf/vwapj/Submission-04547-FoodHealthConsumerProductsCanada.pdf/$file/Submission-04547-FoodHealthConsumerProductsCanada.pdf)
4. Consumer Healthcare Products Association. The Value of OTC Medicines to the U.S. Healthcare System [Internet]. 2019 [cited 2021 Sep 13]. Available from: <https://www.chpa.org/sites/default/files/media/docs/2020-10/Value-of-OTC-Medicines-to-the-US-Healthcare-System-03012019.pdf>
5. Consumer Healthcare Products Association. The Value of OTC Medicine to the United States [Internet]. 2012 [cited 2021 Sep 9]. Available from: <https://www.chpa.org/sites/default/files/media/docs/2020-10/The-Value-OTC-Medicine-to-the-United-States-01012012.pdf>