

# United for Self-Care Coalition

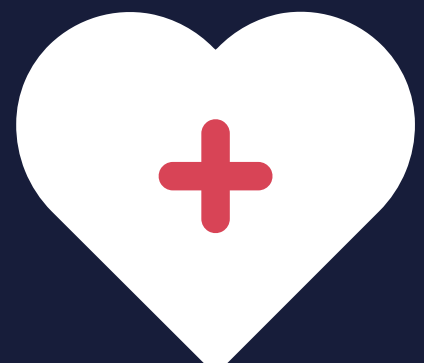


It's Time to put Self-Care at the Front of the Healthcare Debate & Make Self-Care Everybody's Business



One month after the official launch of the United for Self-Care Coalition at the World Health Assembly, the first opportunity for clear reflection and action on the status of our healthcare systems has arrived: Self-Care Month. During WHA76 side-event to launch the Coalition, a panel of speakers discussed the potential benefits of self-care, including how self-care can improve health outcomes, increased access to healthcare services, stronger health systems, and reduced healthcare costs. Most critically, the benefits of self-care can help governments achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC). There are a variety of challenges as well as opportunities that come with this. But integrating self-care into national health policies and strategies is a necessary step to move towards UHC.

The **Coalition** is a global group of like-minded organisations<sup>1</sup> unified by one common goal – to achieve UHC through codifying recognition of the value of self-care within the WHO system, encouraging a WHO Resolution on Self-Care and/or inclusion of self-care as a meaningful component of progress.



<sup>1</sup> Members of the United for Self-Care Coalition include Global Self-Care Federation, American Osteopathic Association, Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry, Cardiff University, Clinton Health Access Initiative, Global Coalition on Aging, Imperial College London, Self-Care Academic Research Unit (SCARU), International Association of Patient Organizations, International Confederation of Midwives, International Council of Nurses, International Pharmaceutical Federation, International Self-Care Foundation, Program for Appropriate Technology in Health, Self-Care Trailblazer Group, White Ribbon Alliance

One year ago, **The Global Social and Economic Value of Self-Care** report was published. It demonstrated that current self-care practices deliver significant economic savings and quality of life improvements – whether in monetary terms (**\$120B** each year) or releasing clinical or individual resources and time (**11.83** workdays per person per year). There are also notable gains in welfare (**\$1.9 trillion** per year), productivity, and quality of life (gain of **22 million** QALYs<sup>2</sup>). No matter which data point we look at, the result is clear. In nations across the economic spectrum, self-care is a valuable part of healthcare infrastructure, brings about significant benefits, and has the potential to bring about even more benefits as self-care are realised.

To realize those benefits, we need to recognize self-care as a multifaceted concept, encompassing a wide variety of health-related practices. It's clear that there is a need for greater acknowledgement of the elements of self-care and the benefits it can deliver, from all stakeholders in the healthcare process. Collective action is required from all sides to ensure that self-care is a key driver towards achieving UHC. This year's Self-Care Month is the perfect opportunity to refocus the debate and put self-care at the heart of our mission to help advance UHC.

We aim to help establish health systems that put people and patients at the centre of health policy and will help support health workers. This means self-care needs to be supported by a framework of policies, funding, and programs. One of the critical steps in this process is codifying self-care within the WHO system and establishing a WHO Resolution on it, or through its direct inclusion as a foundation in resolutions on other health issues.

**Judy Stenmark, Director General of the Global Self-Care Federation**, remarked:

**“The time to act is now.** We believe that self-care is a critical component for advancement of UHC, and we are committed to working with policymakers, healthcare providers, patients, and academia, to promote its integration into healthcare continuum. It's time to make self-care everybody's business”

The last two years have shown us that disruption and adjustment is possible. For us to have a better healthcare future, we need to make an active shift now towards new ideas and new ways of thinking. Self-care needs to be the foundation of any UHC policy moving forward.

<sup>2</sup> Quality Adjusted Life Years, or QALYs, are a standard measurement for the value of health outcomes.

