

Take Care, Canada

Blueprint for a National Self-Care Strategy

November 2020

People are Canada's greatest healthcare resource, but their potential is too often underestimated and under-valued compared to the publicly-funded healthcare system. Canada should support self-care tools, information, products and services that help Canadians make healthy lifestyle choices, treat minor health ailments, manage – or, better yet, prevent – chronic diseases, and more.

Canada needs a national self-care strategy now to:



Increase Canadians' capacity to take care of themselves



Save time, money, and resources



Make our publicly-funded healthcare system more sustainable

Why now?

As the COVID-19 pandemic has made clearer than ever, Canadians want and need the resources, information, products and services to practice self-care as an effective, low-cost complement to investments in the publicly-funded healthcare system.

Evidence shows self-care has substantial health, economic & social benefits

In Canada

Minor shifts have major impacts. If just the 2% of Canadians with colds, headaches or heartburn who seek professional care despite mild to moderate symptoms practiced self-care instead, Canada could eliminate more than 3 million unneeded doctor visits annually and free up physician resources to allow an additional 500,000 Canadians access to a family doctor.

Switching prescription drugs to non-prescription status helps people manage their health, reduces healthcare costs, and boosts the Canadian economy.

3 major areas of impact

\$458 million in reduced cost of medicines

\$290 million in reduced cost for doctor visits

\$290 million value of increased productivity and reduced absenteeism

Around the World

According to the World Health Organization, self-care reduces costs and increases healthcare quality, access, and equity.



Every dollar spent on consumer health products saves an estimated 6-7 USD elsewhere in the healthcare system.

Reclassifying a few select prescription medicines as non-prescription could result in over 1 billion AUD savings.

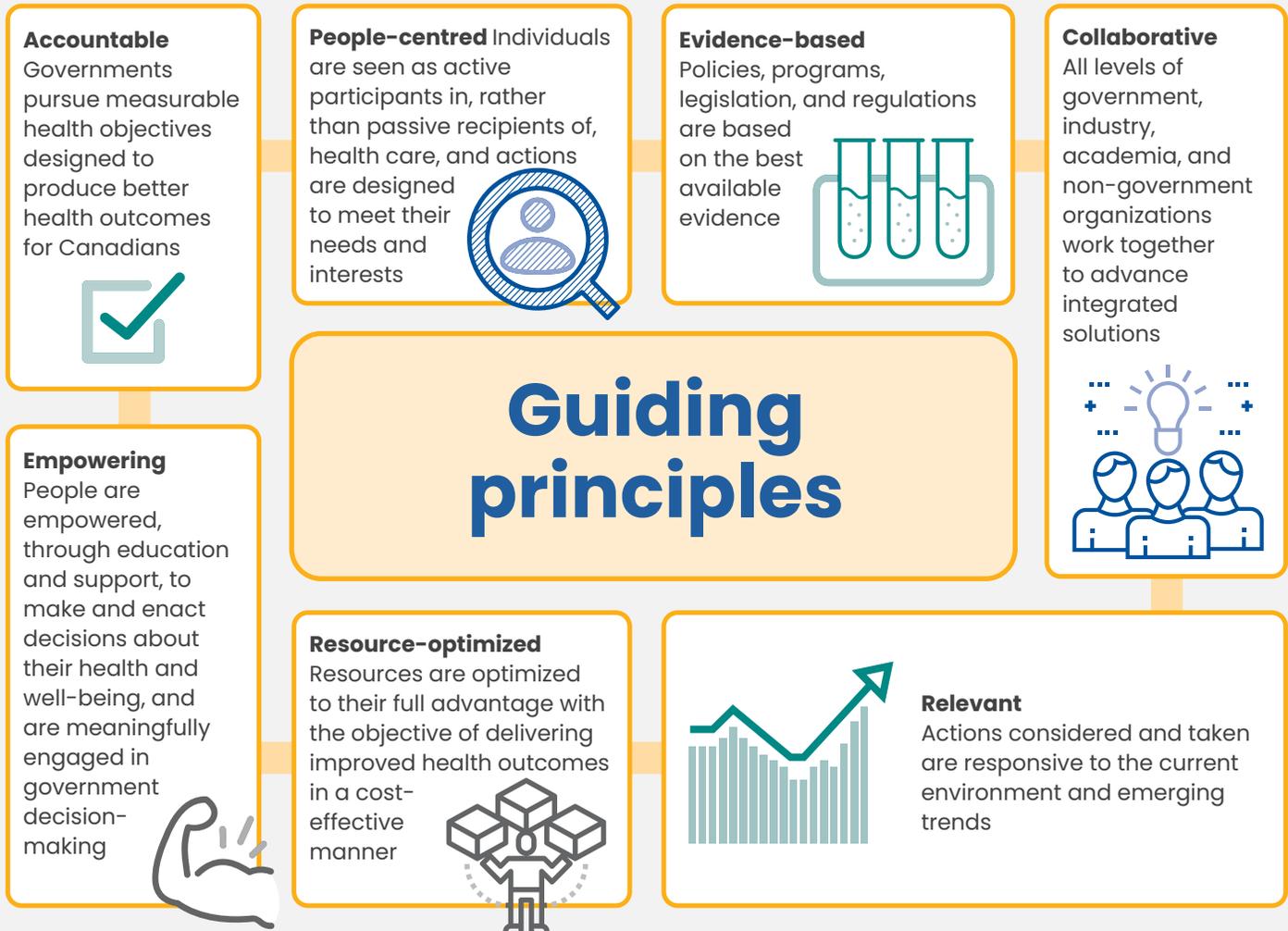


Switching just 5% of medications prescribed to treat conditions suitable for self-care to non-prescription status would save more than 16 billion EUR.

When the National Health Service identified self-care as one of its four pillars and instituted supportive policies, use of publicly-funded healthcare services reduced significantly, health and quality of life improved, and patient satisfaction increased.



The national self-care strategy must be:



The federal government must urgently focus on:

	Building the foundation for a national self-care strategy	Regulating to maximize the benefits of self-care	Supporting competitiveness and incentivizing innovation	Supporting Canadians to practice self-care
Opportunities for Federal Action	Conduct a parliamentary study on the benefits of self-care	Regulate for a digital environment <hr/> Integrate drug scheduling into the federal health product approval process <hr/> Create regulator accountability for achieving health benefits	Apply an economic lens to health product regulation <hr/> Remove unnecessary barriers to switching products from prescription to non-prescription status	Improve self-care literacy <hr/> Implement taxation measures to support and incentivize self-care practices