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Self-Care Only Option For Some People, But Consumer Health Products Don't Reach All

by [Malcolm Spicer](#)

Heiko Schipper, Global Self-Care Federation chairman and Bayer's consumer health business head, says for some consumers, "it's this or nothing." Federation study found between \$100bn and \$200bn is saved annually worldwide from consumers spending on self-care rather than medical care.

Research conducted for the Global Self-Care Federation supports expanding distribution of consumer health care products worldwide with a finding that many people don't have access to medical care, making OTC drugs and other health and wellness products "their only line of defense."

Heiko Schipper, federation board chairman and head of Bayer AG's consumer health business, said recently that the study conducted by an independent group, with results yet to be published, looked at what OTC drugs, dietary supplements and other consumer health remedies "mean for people in their in their lives? What do we really add to this world?"

"They came with a really groundbreaking study, and we're going we're going to communicate on that at the Global Self-Care Federation," Schipper said on 17 March during a Consumer Healthcare Products Association conference.

During a discussion of whether an inflection point has arrived for self-care as an identifiable part of the health care market, he said for consumers in some parts of the world, "it's this or nothing."

"In this world, there's a lot of people who don't have access to go to a doctor. This was a global study, we looked at all parts of the world."

“In this world, there's a lot of people who don't have access to go to a doctor.” – Heiko Schipper, GSCF chairman and Bayer consumer health head

The study also found that between \$100bn and \$200bn is saved annually worldwide from consumers spending on self-care rather than accessing medical care. And when consumers don't have access to self-care products, \$40bn in productivity is lost worldwide.

“The numbers are just so staggering ... on one hand, exciting businesses growing innovation. On the other hand, the impact we have on the planet is just fantastic,” Schipper said.

Making Consumer Businesses Independent Signals Inflection Point

Also on the discussion panel at the CHPA's Self-Care Leadership Summit conducted in-person in Venture, FL, and accessible online, Perrigo president and CEO Murray Kessler pointed out that an inflection point already has been with multiple big pharmas moving to separate their consumer health divisions as independent businesses. (Also see "[J&J Rides Standalone Consumer Health Track](#)" - HBW Insight, 12 Nov, 2021.)

“This is a year that everyone will remember that formed an entire consumer, self-care industry that'll be over \$150 billion,” he said.

It's more than the size of the companies making the products and of the market, Kessler added.

“In the world of the past for consumer health care and treating illnesses, it was an industry that relied on RX-OTC switches,” he said.

“In a world with an industry that broadens to preventing illness, to promoting wellness, the sky's the limit, and you are going see all these dedicated companies with brilliant people that have not had all the resources they possibly could have, to grow and not rely on RX-

GSCF Sustainability Responsibility

The Self-Care Federation also has identified a priority of environmental protection, with firms responsible for 40% of global consumer health product sales already signed onto the group's charter. (Also see "[GSCF Launches Global Self-Care Industry Sustainability Charter](#)" - HBW Insight, 25 Nov, 2021.)

“I think this is very good for our industry so that we can say, we have signed up to a

OTC switches. I believe you will see a level of innovation, whether it's digital, or new products, etc, that will be explosive for the group.”

As a part of a larger company or on its own, Schipper says a consumer health businesses should be “part of society.”

“We are not sort of a separate piece in a separate silo, we are part of society. We have to take our responsibility in society, we have to behave in a certain way. ... sort of the core notion that you always need to have, you are not part of the stock market, you're part of society. And therefore, you have to play that role in a very responsible way. If you do not do that, well, then that actually will impact your future potential to be taken seriously to grow to access capital,” he said.

charter, we are now trying to roll that out to more companies,” Schipper said.

... I think it's very good when we engage with society that we can say our industry has a charter and we are going all together.”

Responsibility Through Appropriate Priorities

Responsibility to society includes having appropriate priorities among the “many topics in society that that maybe need attention,” Schipper said, adding, “At Bayer, we had a lot of discussion ... and we decided in the end to do two things really well.”

First, “we all going to need to really do more to protect our planet,” and Bayer has committed to be carbon neutral by 2030. (Also see "[Bayer Invests €100m Into Making Consumer Health Brands Sustainable](#)" - HBW Insight, 22 Dec, 2021.)

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“We're working extremely hard on that we're working on in the case of consumer health, a lot on packaging. That's, I would say, something that everyone should do,” Schipper said.

Bayer, which doesn't plan to separate its consumer health business, looked to do more, too.

“As we are in the sort of essential industries of feeding the world in a more sustainable way, and on the other hand, taking care of health care, we said, if we look critically at ourselves, you could argue that maybe not enough people have access to our products,” Schipper said.

One area for expanding access was making the German firm’s crop science products and technologies more available to smaller firms. The firm’s management found a similar gap in its pharma and consumer health divisions.

“When we think of healthcare ... how many people can really buy our products, and we came to the conclusion that the access piece of our products is just not high enough, and that we were not intentional enough about it,” Schipper said.

“Because we were just going after the bigger customers enough, which is sort of economic activity will drive you there. We decided, no, we're going to give every business, all three of our businesses, a challenge to increase penetration to the underserved.”

Bayer’s crop science business is challenged to develop products by 2030 to reach 100m small farmers and people that we're not reaching today. The pharma business, with a strong position in women's health, particularly in the childbearing age group, committed to providing as many products for women in Africa and Asia.

“Also in consumer health, we're also looking ... to reach 100 million more people,” Schipper said.