

# Trust begins at the counter



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## Executive Summary

- **In support of universal health coverage**, Opella and SwipeRx are equipping thousands of community pharmacies with digital tools and accredited training to empower pharmacists as catalysts of self-care. The World Health Organization (WHO) identifies self-care as essential to addressing persistent health literacy gaps, medication misuse, and unequal access to primary and preventive care.

**Opella's mission is to turn trusted science into everyday self-care — empowering people and the healthcare professionals who guide them, including pharmacists.**

- Since 2023, we have **trained and certified tens of thousands of pharmacy professionals**, driving substantial increases in **self-care knowledge, confidence** and **referral practices** across a **diverse range of health areas**. As a result, community pharmacies are better equipped to guide millions of people toward safe, informed self-care that strengthens health literacy, prevents illness, and relieves pressure on public health systems.

### Opella + SwipeRx Impact at a Glance (2023–2025)<sup>2</sup>:



**46,000+ accredited self-care training certificates.**



**+16% increase in pharmacist knowledge, confidence & referral ability. Referral accuracy improved from 45% → 90% (Vietnam).**



**Created world-class digital training modules covering more than 8 self-care topics.**

<sup>2</sup>Strand, Mark A., Jeffrey Bratberg, Heidi Eukel, Mark Hardy, and Christopher Williams. 2020. "Community Pharmacists' Contributions to Disease Management during the COVID-19 Pandemic." *Preventing Chronic Disease* 17 (July): E69.

- Pharmacists are the region's most trusted and accessible healthcare professionals**, uniquely positioned to shape responsible self-care behaviours and guide informed health decisions. Community pharmacies also serve as **vital frontline, primary care providers**, serving a diverse range of clients including adolescents, migrant workers, people over age 65, and people with disabilities<sup>1</sup>. Findings from a 2024 survey found that while convenience (35%) remains a key driver of pharmacy visits, nearly as many customers (33.6%) cite trust in the pharmacist's professional expertise, reinforcing the importance of both trust and access as enabling factors of effective self-care through community pharmacies in Southeast Asia.
- Women are central to this transformation.** Across the SwipeRx network of 310,000 pharmacy professionals, 78% are women who serve multiple roles as both pharmacy workers and owners, as well as primary caregivers in their families. Recognising and addressing gendered barriers is vital to unlocking women's full potential as leaders of community-based self-care in Southeast Asia.



## Trusted and Accessible Experts - Redefining the Pharmacist's Role

Community pharmacies are one of Southeast Asia's most valuable yet often under recognized healthcare assets. A recent report found that pharmacies serve as the primary point of care for people across the region, surpassing doctor visits by a factor of 10<sup>3</sup>. This reflects not only the widespread availability of pharmacies across the region, including in rural and peri-urban areas, but also the trust they have cultivated within their communities. The opportunity is substantial: 70–85% of consumers across the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Indonesia embrace pharmacies as primary healthcare providers when supported by strong inter-professional partnerships – validating the transformative potential of investing in pharmacy capacity and system integration<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup>SwipeRx digital training monitoring data: January 2023–November 2025

<sup>3</sup>Centre for Impact Investing and Practices (CIIP), Singapore Management University (SMU), and Accenture. 2022. "Scaling Impact in Asia: Achieving Purpose and Profit" [https://ciip.com.sg/docs/default-source/default-document-library/scaling-impact-in-asia-2022-case-study\\_bandhan-bank\\_ciip-accenture-smu7c59e585-1a96-48f6-a141-3d728297035c.pdf?sfvrsn=b63c127e\\_3](https://ciip.com.sg/docs/default-source/default-document-library/scaling-impact-in-asia-2022-case-study_bandhan-bank_ciip-accenture-smu7c59e585-1a96-48f6-a141-3d728297035c.pdf?sfvrsn=b63c127e_3)

<sup>4</sup>Bain & Company. 2024. "Asia-Pacific Front Line of Healthcare 2024." [https://www.bain.com/globalassets/noindex/2024/bain\\_report\\_asia-pacific\\_front\\_line\\_of\\_healthcare\\_2024.pdf](https://www.bain.com/globalassets/noindex/2024/bain_report_asia-pacific_front_line_of_healthcare_2024.pdf)

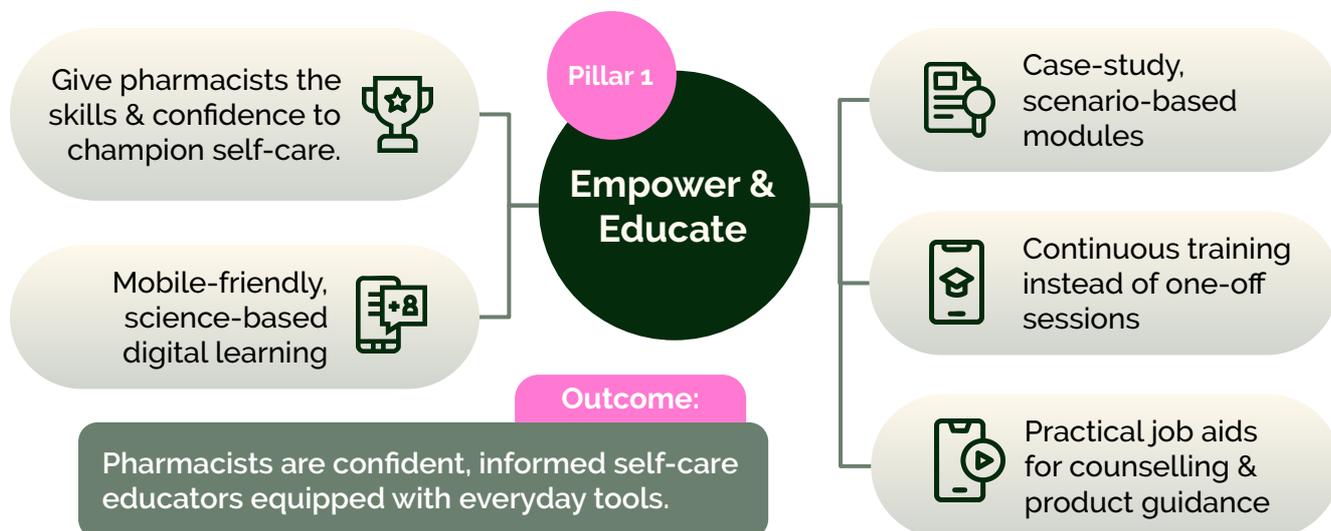
When equipped with training, convenient access to quality health products and practical counselling and referral tools, pharmacy professionals emerge as powerful advocates for family and community health – confidently counselling clients on nutrition, reproductive health, preventive care, and management of common illnesses<sup>5</sup>. By translating complex medical information into everyday language, pharmacists strengthen functional health literacy and empower informed decision-making at community levels. They bridge the gap between their clients and clinical care by identifying early signs of illness and guiding appropriate action, ensuring self-care remains linked to national health systems<sup>6</sup>.



*“Let’s promote self-care, let’s have one voice and one job as a pharmacist—and that is promoting healthcare, educating clients, and ensuring health literacy.”*

– Dr. Harvey Adamson,  
Philippines Pharmacist Association

## What Pharmacists Need to Lead Self-Care at the Counter

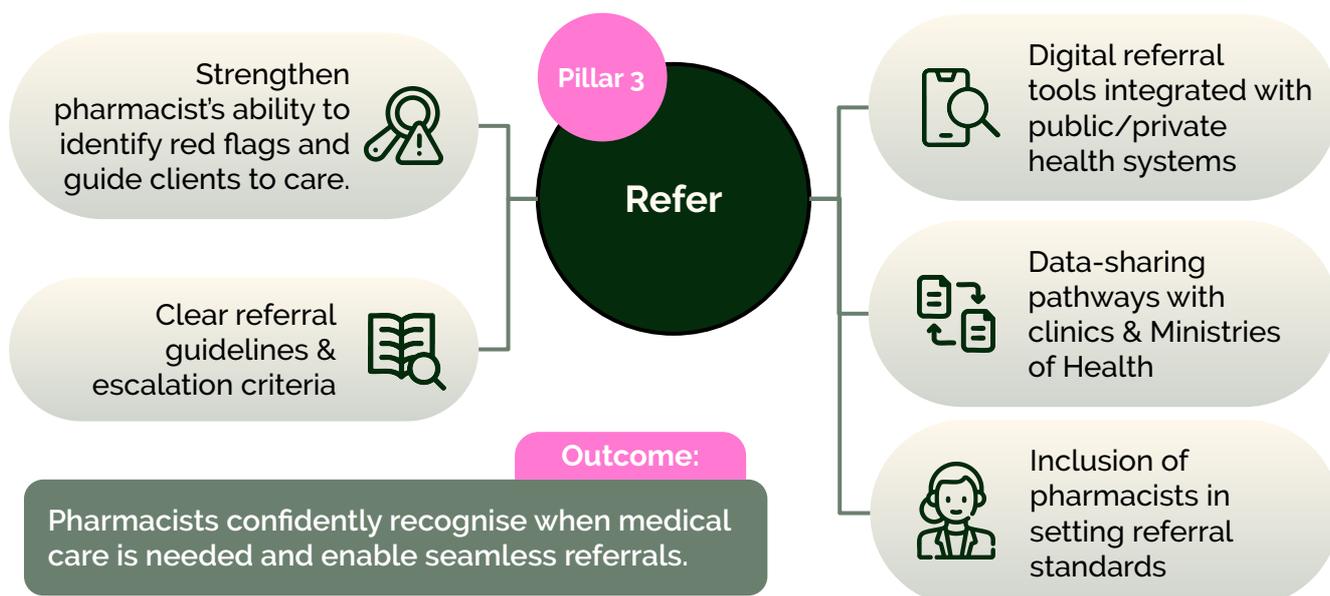
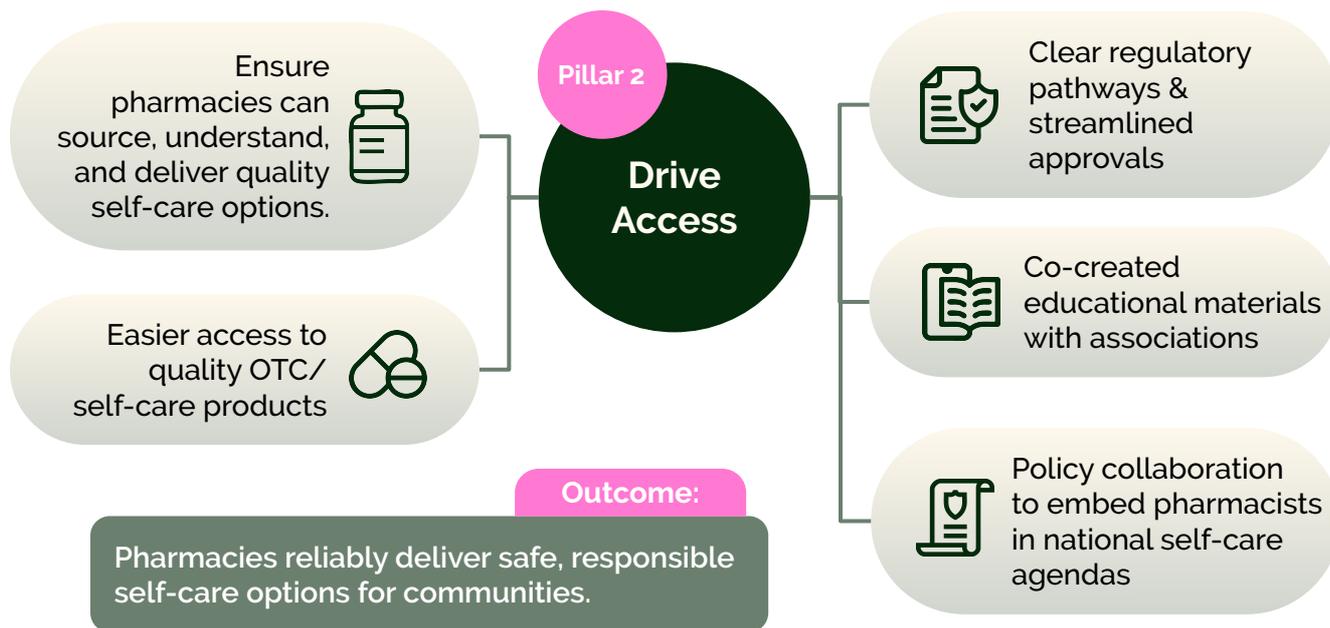


<sup>5</sup>Chinwe, Ugwu Nneka. 2025. "The Contribution of Community Pharmacists to Public Health Outreach Programs." *World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews* 27 (1): 1816–19.

<sup>6</sup>Francis, Jolly, and Suja Abraham. 2014. "Clinical Pharmacists: Bridging the Gap between Patients and Physicians." *Saudi Pharmaceutical Journal: SPJ: The Official Publication of the Saudi Pharmaceutical Society* 22 (6): 600–602.

*"Going forward, we need more online training opportunities with real-life pharmacy scenarios and a balance between lectures and interactive sections and discussions to help us build competency as self-care leaders in our pharmacies."*

– Woman Pharmacist, Da Nang, Vietnam



## Roadmap for Scaling Self-Care through Community Pharmacies

Building on measurable progress to date, between 2026 and 2028 Opella and SwipeRx commit to transforming the scale, quality and impact of pharmacist professional training across Southeast Asia. By moving beyond knowledge gains to build confidence and improve pharmacy practices, Opella and SwipeRx are pursuing systemic and sustainable improvements in pharmacists' capacity and leadership in self-care during the next three years.

### Key Performance Indicators: 2026–2028

	KPI	Demonstrates
Reach	 <p>≥ <b>80,000 certificates</b> for pharmacy-focused self-care digital trainings generated across Southeast Asia by 2028</p>	Scale of accredited digital training for self-care through community pharmacies.
	 <p>≥ <b>60,000 unique pharmacists</b> engaged with self-care digital materials and training across Southeast Asia by 2028</p>	Scale and inclusivity of digital training for self-care through community pharmacies.
Self-Care Knowledge	 <p>≥ <b>+25 % average improvement</b> in self-care knowledge among pharmacists trained by Opella &amp; SwipeRx</p>	Effective digital learning for self-care.
Self-Care Confidence	 <p>≥ <b>+30 % average improvement</b> in confidence to facilitate self-care among pharmacists trained by Opella &amp; SwipeRx</p>	Post-training readiness to serve as a self-care champion at the pharmacy.

In addition, Opella and SwipeRx will use digital research to assess changes in pharmacy practices related to self-care during the 2026-2028 phase of our partnership.

Together, Opella and SwipeRx commit to empowering pharmacists as the trusted leaders of self-care across Southeast Asia. By expanding access to world-class digital training, strengthening health system integration, and equipping pharmacy professionals with the tools and recognition they need, this partnership will continue driving measurable progress toward Universal Health Coverage. When pharmacists lead, communities thrive — and the future of equitable, accessible healthcare becomes possible for all.



*“Pharmacists are the human engine of everyday self-care. When we equip them with trusted science, digital tools, and recognition, we unlock healthier choices for millions across Southeast Asia.”*

– Dr. Deepa Maharaj,  
Global Head of HCP  
Science, Opella



*“Across Southeast Asia, women pharmacists are redefining community health. Our partnership with SwipeRx ensures they have the learning, confidence, and systems support to lead the future of self-care.”*

– Martina Sposito,  
General Manager,  
ASEA, Opella



*“At SwipeRx, we use technology to scale digital training with a focus on improving pharmacy practices. Our next chapter with Opella goes beyond self-care knowledge to build skills and confidence to champion self-care at the pharmacy.”*

– Farouk Meralli,  
Founder & CEO,  
SwipeRx

## Opella Policy Priorities for Pharmacist-Led Self-Care

Understanding that science only creates value when it reaches people who can act on it, Opella's mission is to turn trusted science into everyday self-care. In partnership with policymakers, SwipeRx and others, Opella equips pharmacists, who are the most accessible healthcare professionals, with the knowledge, tools, and systems they need to drive improvements in health literacy and community-level self-care for prevention and management of common health conditions. These policy priorities reflect Opella's long-term commitment to measurable pharmacist impact — from self-care knowledge to behaviour change to better community health outcomes.

Building on WHO and FIP frameworks and grounded in Opella's real-world evidence and partnerships, the following five policy priorities are at the core of Opella's commitment to make pharmacist-led self-care a measurable driver of Universal Health Coverage across Southeast Asia.

1.  
Elevate  
pharmacists as  
frontline health  
literacy leaders

**To institutionalize pharmacists role within national health-literacy, prevention, and self-care strategies — embedding self-care, responsible product use, and counselling skills into national CPD and pre-service training frameworks.**

*Outcome: every pharmacy visit becomes a health-literacy moment.*

2.  
Mandate enabling  
systems and  
incentives

**Advocate for performance-based and preventive-care remuneration models that recognise pharmacists' contribution to reducing health-system burden.**

*Outcome: pharmacists recognized and rewarded for championing self-care.*

3.  
Integrate  
pharmacies with  
public health  
systems

**Promote policy frameworks that include practical pharmacy referral tools and data-sharing systems between pharmacies, clinics, and Ministries of health — ensuring early detection and seamless client pathways.**

*Outcome: primary care pathways are easy for clients to access and for Ministries to track through pharmacy as well as public health facility channels.*

**4. Empower women pharmacists as community health catalysts**

**Champion gender-inclusive policies that expand access to accredited digital learning, career mobility, and leadership for women who represent nearly 80% of the pharmacy workforce in Southeast Asia.**

*Outcome: women pharmacy professionals empowered to thrive at the counter and beyond.*

**5. Ensure equitable access to evidence-based self-care**

**Support transparent regulatory pathways and responsible OTC/self-care access that protect safety while encouraging innovation and local relevance, including guidance on traditional remedies.**

*Outcome: quality self-care health products are available where and when people need them.*



Improvement in pharmacists self-care knowledge, confidence & referral capacity after Opella training.

Cumulative number of self-care training certificates issued to pharmacists and pharmacy technicians (2023-2025)

Together with partners like SwipeRx, Opella is committed to translating these priorities into action — combining digital reach, pharmacist empowerment, and science-backed self-care practices to create measurable progress toward Universal Health Coverage.

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