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MEDIA STATEMENT

New economic report helps to build the case for complementary medicines

The Australian Self-Medication Industry (ASMI), the industry body representing non-prescription consumer healthcare products, today welcomed a new report that highlights the potential for significant savings in healthcare costs through wider use of complementary medicines.

The Executive Director of ASMI, Deon Schoombie said the study provides a sound economic foundation for wider acceptance and encouragement of the legitimate role for complementary medicine.

“When taken together with the strong body of clinical evidence in support of complementary medicines, we now have strong economic evidence demonstrating the important part they can play in healthcare.

“This should enhance the case for further research into those areas where complementary medicines can be most valuable, particularly in preventative health and managing chronic conditions,” Dr Schoombie said.

The latest research was conducted by Access Economics for the National Institute of Complementary Medicine (NICM) at the University of Western Sydney. It looked at the cost effectiveness of selected complementary medicines in treating some common health problems including lower back pain, heart disease, depression and arthritis.

Complementary medicines specifically examined included St John’s Wort, fish oils, acupuncture and a herbal anti-inflammatory preparation.

“It is clear that many Australians have turned to complementary medicines as a means of helping to manage chronic conditions and maintaining good health. These treatments should be integrated into the prevention and management of conditions which contribute to the huge burden of disease. It could also form an essential element in the trend to consumer self care, where individuals are taking greater personal responsibility for their health.

“This new evidence will help to build the case for wider use of complementary medicines and will assist Australians in making informed decisions about the best way to manage their health,” Dr Schoombie said.

About ASMI: The Australian Self-Medication Industry (ASMI) is the peak industry body for the Australian self care industry representing consumer healthcare products including over-the-counter medicines and complementary medicines. ASMI's mission is to promote better health through responsible self-care. This means ensuring that safe and effective self-care products are readily available to all Australians at a reasonable cost. ASMI works to encourage responsible use by consumers and an increasing role for cost-effective self-medication products as part of the broad national health strategy. www.asmi.com.au

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