Organizations that are considering offering self-care information solely online and not in a book format should reassess this strategy to determine if it will enable them to achieve their objectives. If their goal is to provide health information to only about a quarter of their employees/members and they are not concerned with whether it reduces costs, then online alone may be sufficient. However, if your goal is to reduce health care costs and reach the majority of your employees/subscribers, a printed self-care guide is a necessity. The facts below explain why a self-care publication, used either by itself or along with an online version, is the best way to help your organization and its employees/members.

1. There have been scores of studies on printed self-care guides that have documented lower health care costs due to reductions in physician and E.R. visits. The average Return on Investment is 3:1. There are no studies that have shown any financial benefit from providing online self-care information. (See references that follow.)

2. Only about 50% of the U.S. population has internet access and only about half of them go online for health information. You will only reach about 25% of your employees/members with online self-care content.

   Source: *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, May 14, 2003

3. According to a research study involving over 60,000 people, consumers were found to be more interested in receiving health information from their doctor, books, or friends/relatives before using the internet. Only 16% of those surveyed said the internet is where they like to receive health information.

   Source: *Center for Studying Health System Change, Issue Brief No. 61, March, 2003*

4. The information in a self-care guide is concise and easily accessible. In an emergency, you don't want to spend time booting up your computer and going online. Also, some people have trouble using their computers or have slow dial-up service and find the process to be very time consuming.

   A self-care book allows information to be accessed from any room in the home, not just the computer room. In addition, when using a self-care book, employees/members don't have to compete with other family members for internet access.
5. If an employee only has internet or intranet access at their worksite, they won’t be able to access self-care information at home where they need it the most. Also, they will be using company time to surf the web for health information.

Even if your employees have access to the internet at home and are knowledgeable about how to find information, they may not be the home's "caregiver." Also, the family's "caregiver" may not be internet savvy. A printed self-care guide gives them the opportunity to receive self-care instructions at home on their own time.

6. Putting your organization's name and logo on a self-care guide indicates your sponsorship of the publication. Studies have shown that over 90% of employees think receiving a self-care guide is a valuable employee benefit. Providing online self-care information may not create the same positive feelings towards the organization.

7. On the web, there are usually many articles on a particular subject. Consumers need to do a good deal of searching to find the article that is most relevant for them. Users of a self-care publication do not have to scroll through scores of articles to find what they need.

8. By providing all employees/members with the same self-care guide, you know they are getting consistent recommendations about what to do for various symptoms. Consumers going to different websites may get conflicting or inaccurate information.

9. When consumers do go online for health information, they are more likely to do so for a specific disease, like asthma or diabetes, rather than for an everyday health problem, like a sore throat or cold.

   Source: Pew Internet and American Life Project, 2003

10. Most people still prefer the convenience of pulling a self-care publication off their bookshelf and sitting down to use it. If books were no longer an important source of information, Barnes and Noble, Borders, and Amazon would not be as popular as they are.

Self-Care Study References