

# eWellness magazine

## Global Wellness Institute Launches White Paper Series: “Understanding Wellness”

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The Global Wellness Institute™ (GWI), nonprofit research and educational resource for the world wellness industry, launched a new white paper series: “Understanding Wellness.” The new research papers are designed to become the go-to primer for policymakers, businesspeople, researchers, and students to understand—in clear and simple terms and backed by rich data—the major force that wellness has become around the world and how it will evolve in the future.

This first paper, *The Global Forces Driving the Growth of the Wellness Economy*, examines the four macro forces that are propelling consumer demand and the ongoing, surging growth of the wellness economy around the world. Future topics will include important definitions and terminologies, a thorough history of wellness, and the wellness movement’s social and economic implications.



### UNDERSTANDING WELLNESS: Four Global Forces Driving the Growth of the Wellness Economy

From loneliness to the environmental crisis

***“Wellness is a concept that is both ancient and contemporary. Because of that, most people have an intuitive understanding of what it means, how to apply it to daily life, or how to create business opportunities out of it,” noted Ophelia Yeung, GWI senior researcher and co-author of the series. “The wellness economy is now a \$4.2 trillion global industry. Yet, the questions that we most often encounter are: ‘What is wellness?’ ‘Why is it growing?’ and ‘What does it really mean?’ In the ‘Understanding Wellness’ series, we want to answer these questions because a common language for and a basic understanding of wellness can help bridge the divide with other industries and disciplines and broaden its applications and impacts.”***

The white paper released a few weeks ago examines the four global forces that are driving the seemingly unstoppable growth of wellness. In recent decades, vast economic, technological, social, demographic, and environmental changes have transformed every aspect of our lives—our homes and communities, food, work, shopping, education, friendship, leisure, travel, etc.—with both positive and negative

impacts on our wellbeing. The growth of wellness practices and businesses is fundamentally a consumer response to these developments, and this movement is turning into a major societal and economic force.

### **The Four Forces Driving the Wellness Boom:**

#### **1. The world's population is growing sicker, lonelier and older.**

Deteriorating health, the spread of loneliness and mental illness, and the ramifications of aging all negatively impact people's happiness and wellbeing. In response, consumers around the world are proactively turning to wellness approaches as alternatives to address these challenges.

#### **2. The environmental crisis is also a health crisis.**

Environmental degradation and its causes are bringing immediate, direct, severe and widespread harm to human health and wellbeing—from the air, we breathe to how we procure and consume food to how we live and travel. As people become aware of these risks, they're seeking out alternative lifestyles that are simultaneously healthier for themselves and more sustainable for the planet.

#### **3. Health systems are failing to keep up while the economic burden rises.**

Health systems are failing in countries all around the world, and the economic burden is unsustainable. Therefore, it's not surprising that consumers, employers and even governments are turning to wellness approaches to complement and address deficiencies in healthcare and to turn from "sick care" to prevention.

#### **4. Demographics, value systems and lifestyles are all evolving toward wellness.**

Consumer values are changing fast, moving toward a lifestyle of wellness that is fundamentally shifting consumer behaviors and consumption patterns. This shift is bolstered by the rise of the middle class, urbanization, the accessibility of so many new options, and a burgeoning concern about the impact of ubiquitous technology.

*"Over the last 11 years, our work has focused on defining and measuring the industries that comprise the wellness economy—and GWI has become the leading resource for wellness industry data,"* said Katherine Johnston, GWI senior researcher and co-author of the series. *"Through that work, we have built up a vast conceptual knowledge of wellness, its drivers, and its implications. We're excited to present foundational information about wellness through this new white paper series."*

### **About the Global Wellness Institute:**

The Global Wellness Institute (GWI), a nonprofit 501(c)(3), is considered the leading global research and educational resource for the global wellness industry and is known for introducing major industry initiatives and regional events that bring together leaders to chart the future. GWI positively impacts global health and wellness by advocating for both public institutions and businesses that are working to help prevent disease, reduce stress, and enhance the overall quality of life. Its mission is to empower wellness worldwide.