

Written submission from the Hong Kong Medical Association

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Via Fax & Mail
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Mrs. Constance Li
Clerk to Panel
Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Madam,

Legislative Council Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene Special meeting on 2 February 2004

We write in support of the proposed Nutrition Labeling Scheme, which is an important move in the right direction.

Healthy persons with a balanced diet might not need to pay much attention to the nutritional content of the food they take. Patients with chronic diseases, elderly, pregnant women and children often need to adjust the consumption level of certain nutrients for the sake of maintaining good health. Nutrition labeling is important in that it helps the consumer make an informed choice. Standardization of nutrition labeling prevents confusion and makes it easier for consumers to make comparisons.

As the variation of potassium level in blood can cause serious consequences, such as an abnormal heart rhythm or cardiac arrest, and the test for potassium content in food can easily be done while testing the sodium content, we would like to suggest the inclusion of potassium as one of the core nutrients to be labeled.

We are also supportive of introducing the labeling requirement in phases to allow time for the trade and industry to make the necessary adjustments to the proposed requirement, but we are of the opinion that the proposed 5 years for full implementation of mandatory nutritional labeling requirement is longer than necessary.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Steven S.L. Li
Hon. Secretary