

**Written submission from Hong Kong Doctors Union**

Our ref.: HKDU/025/2004

30th January 2004

By fax and mail

Mrs. Constance Li  
Clerk to Panel  
Panel on Food Safety and  
Environmental Hygiene  
Legislative Council  
Legislative Council Bldg.,  
8 Jackson Road  
Central, H.K.

Dear Mrs. Li,

**Re: Administration's proposal on the labelling scheme on nutrition information**

Hong Kong Doctors Union fully supports the captioned proposal so that the public can be fully aware of the implications of consuming these products and take necessary precautions to avoid unwanted side effects if taken. Labelling prevents raising false hopes of cures, improvements or prevention of diseases by taking the products which may not be as "nutritional" as claimed.

However, Hong Kong Doctors Union must stress the same strict requirement be made mandatory for all so called health food products in addition to actual nutritional products. The former often are medical products claimed to have therapeutic effects in addition to nutritional values. The claims often refer to medical component in the health food and may contain Western or Chinese medicine. For the proper guidance of the public, Hong Kong Doctors Union seriously requests the Panel to make health foods to be included in the compulsory labelling requirement.

Concerning the contents of labelling, we have the following suggestions. We recommend to shorten the allowable period for implementation of mandatory labelling from five years to three years. We suggest a more stringent control on function claims. Any stated function claimed must be supported with scientifically accepted evidence, and we cannot stress more on this requirement. On the items listed for labelling we suggest adding potassium content since abnormal potassium levels adversely affects the human body.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Ho Ock Ling  
Hon. Secretary  
Hong Kong Doctors Union

cc: Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP