

Our ref.: HKDU/128/2004

30th June 2004

By fax and mail

Panel on Housing  
Legislative Council  
Legislative Council Building  
8 Jackson Road  
Central, Hong Kong

Attn: Ms. Sarah Yuen  
Clerk to Panel

Dear Sir / Madam,

Re: Divestment of Housing Authority's Retail and Car-parking Facility

The Hong Kong Doctors Union, evolved from former Estate Doctors Association, has helped the Housing Authority in allocation of public housing estate clinics for over 30 years. Our Union membership has now the greatest number of private doctors practicing in public estate clinics among all medical groups.

Since the Housing Authority had changed the policy in the letting method of estate clinics to open tender on 1.1.2000, the inflated rental, offered by these tenders has forced the rental of existing clinics to rise from a few thousand dollars up to a few ten-thousand dollars with resultant increase of consultation fee of estate doctors to cover the huge overhead expenses.

It will certainly raise the burden on the estate residents and they might need to go to Government out-patient clinics or clinics outside the estates instead of paying higher fees to the estate doctors. According to the results of our questionnaire on Medical Fee and Practice conducted on 6.6.2003 (ANNEX A), 88% of estate doctors had a drop in number of patients as compared with last year. The average daily patient attendance dropped from 36 to 28. This situation is expected even worse if all commercial tenancies are under the divestment project.

Successful medical treatment depends very much on the good personal and continuous doctor-patient relationship to patients. If the estate doctors in solo practice are forced to surrender their clinic because of the exorbitant rents, it would result in the lack of continuity of medical care for the estate residents.

For the health and welfare of the public estate residents, we request public estate doctors, as main providers of health services in public housing estates, to be treated differently from other commercial tenants. We sincerely hope that the Government will accede to our following suggestions:-

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1. To exclude all medical clinic tenancies from the divestment project and that Hong Kong Housing Authority remains as the landlord with no change to the present status. Public estate doctors would then be able to provide continuous high quality low-cost healthcare services to the residents and to alleviate the imbalance patient load of public and private healthcare sectors, relieving the heavy burden of the former sector.
2. The existing tenancy guidelines of estate clinics should be taken into consideration, such as the doctor to patient provision ratio.
3. All clinics should be located in conveniently accessible sites in the interest of handicapped patients.
4. We believe to maintain strong doctor-patient relationship, it is very important to have a longer tenancy period such as the 9-year priority tenancies renewal with 3 years revision interval subject to the change of price indices and to keep the availability of early tenancy termination policy.
5. Clinic tenants should be entitled to participate in the new management so as to ensure our views reflected and interests protected.
6. We suggest the sale of priority shares of the new public listed company on Divestment to existing tenants to serve as buffer against any possible rental increase in future.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Yours faithfully,

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

Results of Questionnaire on Medical Fee and Practice  
Conducted by Hong Kong Doctors Union on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2003

1. The average charge for each consultation with 2 days medicine for patients with general problems are:-

| <u>Fee</u> | <u>No. of doctors</u> | <u>2003 %</u> | <u>2002 %</u> | <u>Fee</u> | <u>No. of doctors</u> | <u>2003 %</u> | <u>2002 %</u> |
|------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|
| \$60-69    | 0                     | 0             | 1             | \$190-199  | 9                     | 6             | 5             |
| \$70-79    | 1                     | 1             | 0             | \$200-219  | 8                     | 5             | 4             |
| \$80-89    | 0                     | 0             | 0             | \$220-239  | 2                     | 1             | 1             |
| \$90-99    | 1                     | 1             | 1             | \$240-259  | 1                     | 1             | 1             |
| \$100-109  | 1                     | 1             | 1             | \$260-279  | 1                     | 1             | 1             |
| \$110-119  | 1                     | 1             | 0             | \$280-299  | 0                     | 0             | 1             |
| \$120-129  | 6                     | 4             | 6             | \$300-319  | 1                     | 1             | 0             |
| \$130-139  | 11                    | 8             | 6             | \$320-339  | 0                     | 0             | 0             |
| \$140-149  | 18                    | 12            | 16            | \$340-359  | 0                     | 0             | 0             |
| \$150-159  | <b>33</b>             | <b>23</b>     | <b>22</b>     | \$360-389  | 1                     | 1             | 1             |
| \$160-169  | 14                    | 10            | 10            | \$400      | 0                     | 0             | 1             |
| \$170-179  | 16                    | 11            | 11            | \$500      | 2                     | 1             | 0             |
| \$180-189  | 14                    | 10            | 11            | \$1,300    | 1                     | 1             | 0             |

142 doctors = 100%

**\*\* The average daily patient attendance is 28.**

124 doctors (87%) had a decrease in number of patients as compared with last year.

The average decrease in patients is 39%.

2. For 83 doctors whose clinics are inside or near public housing estates, the fees are as follows:

| <u>Fee</u> | <u>No. of doctors</u> | <u>2003 %</u> | <u>2002 %</u> | <u>Fee</u>       | <u>No. of doctors</u> | <u>2003 %</u> | <u>2002 %</u> |
|------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|
| \$60-69    | 0                     | 0             | 1             | <b>\$150-159</b> | <b>24</b>             | <b>29</b>     | <b>25</b>     |
| \$70-79    | 1                     | 1             | 0             | \$160-169        | 10                    | 12            | 12            |
| \$80-89    | 0                     | 0             | 0             | \$170-179        | 9                     | 11            | 11            |
| \$90-99    | 1                     | 1             | 1             | \$180-189        | 6                     | 7             | 9             |
| \$100-109  | 1                     | 1             | 0             | \$190-199        | 5                     | 6             | 2             |
| \$110-119  | 0                     | 0             | 0             | \$200-219        | 3                     | 4             | 3             |
| \$120-129  | 4                     | 5             | 11            | \$220-239        | 0                     | 0             | 0             |
| \$130-139  | 5                     | 6             | 7             | \$300-319        | 0                     | 0             | 0             |
| \$140-149  | 14                    | 17            | 18            | \$340-359        | 0                     | 0             | 0             |

83 doctors = 100%

**\*\* The average daily patient attendance is 28.**

73 doctors (88%) had a decrease in number of patients as compared with last year.

The average decrease in patients is 39%.

3. For 59 doctors whose clinics are not near public housing estates, the fees are as follows:

| <u>Fee</u>       | <u>No. of doctors</u> | <u>2003 %</u> | <u>2002 %</u> | <u>Fee</u> | <u>No. of doctors</u> | <u>2003 %</u> | <u>2002 %</u> |
|------------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|
| \$60-69          | 0                     | 0             | 0             | \$190-199  | 4                     | 7             | 9             |
| \$70-79          | 0                     | 0             | 0             | \$200-219  | 5                     | 8             | 6             |
| \$80-89          | 0                     | 0             | 0             | \$220-239  | 2                     | 3             | 3             |
| \$90-99          | 0                     | 0             | 0             | \$240-259  | 1                     | 2             | 2             |
| \$100-109        | 0                     | 0             | 3             | \$260-279  | 1                     | 2             | 2             |
| \$110-119        | 1                     | 2             | 0             | \$280-299  | 0                     | 0             | 2             |
| \$120-129        | 2                     | 3             | 0             | \$300-319  | 1                     | 2             | 0             |
| \$130-139        | 6                     | 10            | 6             | \$340-359  | 0                     | 0             | 0             |
| \$140-149        | 4                     | 7             | 13            | \$360      | 1                     | 2             | 2             |
| <b>\$150-159</b> | <b>9</b>              | <b>15</b>     | <b>18</b>     | \$400      | 0                     | 0             | 2             |
| \$160-169        | 4                     | 7             | 7             | \$500      | 2                     | 3             | 0             |
| \$170-179        | 7                     | 12            | 12            | \$1,300    | 1                     | 2             | 0             |
| \$180-189        | 8                     | 13            | 13            |            |                       |               |               |

59 doctors = 100%

**\*\* The average daily patient attendance is 28.**

51 doctors (86%) had a decrease in number of patients as compared with last year.

The average decrease in patients is 39%.

4. The status of doctors:

| <u>Status</u>            | <u>No. of<br/>doctors</u> | <u>%</u>   |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| G.P.                     | 110                       | 77         |
| G.P. with higher degrees | 25                        | 18         |
| Specialist               | <u>7</u>                  | <u>5</u>   |
|                          | <u>142</u>                | <u>100</u> |

5. Location of clinics:

| <u>Location</u>                | <u>No. of<br/>doctors</u> | <u>%</u>   |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| Inside public housing estate   | 53                        | 37         |
| Near public housing estate     | 30                        | 21         |
| Not near public housing estate | <u>59</u>                 | <u>42</u>  |
|                                | <u>142</u>                | <u>100</u> |