

From:"kit leung"

Subject:Asking for registration system for dietitians

Dear members of Panel on Health Services,

I am asking for the establishment of a registration system for dietitians and nutritionist. I studied in the USA and became a US registered dietitian. I am working in HK right now. Dietitians/nutritionists are part of the medical team. However, unlike other medical providers like physicians, therapists, nurses (RN), etc., we do not have a registration system for dietitian/nutritionist in HK, and this makes a hole for our health care system.

Scientists have proved that what we eat is essential for maintaining healthy life. We (dietitian and nutritionist) are the experts for food and nutrition. However, we don't even have any policy or law to ensure the qualification of this professional. Developed countries like England, USA, Canada and Australia have already had a well established registration system for dietitian, so HK should not fall behind.

Lack of registration system would let people who do not qualify practice dietetics, and that is very dangerous. They simply do not have the knowledge and skills to do that, and malpractice may occur. I can provide you an example. I have worked for a health and beauty centre for a year. One of the nutritionists there (she do not have the qualification) failed to give the correct diet therapy for a renal decrease client. I discovered this fault when I follow up this client. In this case, the renal function of this client became worse. So, is it the fault of that "nutritionist"? – she just doesn't have the knowledge. Is it the fault of the employer? – there is no policy or law to restrict her to hire qualified dietitian/nutritionist. In my opinion, the fault is on the lacking of registration system.

I recently lost my job just because my former employer can hire an unqualified nutritionist with a lot less money instead of paying more to keep a registered dietitian (me). I think that is very sad.... Not only for me. I mean for the whole professional. That is very unfair for us. We spent more time, pay more money and give a lot more effort for our education and our qualification. It turns out that we cannot get any jobs because people out there call themselves "dietitian" or "nutritionist" but without adequate qualification. How sad!?

The 3 dietitian/nutritionist associations in HK have spoken out many times to address this problem. I can't think of any reason why we don't need a registration system for the dietitian/nutritionist. The "old" HK government was late on everything. Should we need a big malpractice case in order to address this problem?? Please establish a registration system for dietitians. Thanks.

Best Regards,

Kit Fung Leung RD