

28 December, 2006

To: All members, LegCo Panel on Housing

Dear Honourable Members,

I am a doctor practising family medicine at a shopping centre run by a private property developer. Recently, I have read news reports about the Link's plan to build a medical zone at some of the public estate malls.

The opposition launched by my fellow practitioners against The Link's move is misguided. I have heard a doctor say that clinics should be located where shopper traffic is the highest in the mall. In fact, it is a common practice for clinics to be in the quiet corners of a shopping mall. Medical services are need-driven. Patients will come as long as the doctors provide good service and clinic locations are reasonably convenient, with clear signage.

Based on what I have heard, I see the reasons for moving the clinics in Wong Tai Sin Shopping Centre — standalone washroom, independent washroom, extra waiting lobby, greater synergy among medical providers, support of longer service hours — far out-weigh those against. With these integrated facilities we can provide better services to the public housing residents. If the existing doctors do not like those plans, I am sure many other doctors would like to operate clinics there, considering that housing estates are generally regarded by doctors as a market segment providing relatively stable revenue source.

The medical zone issue has sparked spirited discussions within our profession. You can have a good grasp the profession's views by referring to the Doctor's Union online chatroom (I have enclosed some of the views expressed there for your easy reference). As far as I can see, the high-profile opposition staged by the doctors concerned seemed more motivated by the desire to protect vested interests than genuine concerns for patients' rights.

Knowing that the Legco Housing Panel will hold a meeting to discuss this issue in the near future, I hope this message will help your panel see the issue in the proper perspective, and have a more informed discussion.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Yours sincerely,



A General Practitioner in private practice

Appendix

Industry players' view from HKDU's forum:
(<http://pub2.bravenet.com/forum/86057161/fetch/635422/>)

Subject: Re: Re: 黃大仙下 35000 居民無診所

Name: Non Estate Doctor

Date Posted: Dec 10, 06 - 1:16 AM

Message: Why make the fuss now that only 300 doctors affected.

Estate clinics enjoying cheap rent, but their fee is sometimes higher than the non-estate doctors nearby.

We all know that Estate doctors are the doctors with best earnings in town, and they are putting up a good show saying that they protest for the sake of their patients!! They should be awarded the best actors of the year.

All private doctors are under the pressure of rent-negotiation by their respective landlords -- would Dr Choi care to say a word for them ??

Subject: 發動醫生遊行

Name: GP23

Date Posted: Dec 10, 06 - 1:33 AM

Message: Non Estate Doctors should support 醫生遊行, we don't understand why the LINK limits the number of clinic sites per Estate.

There are so many doctors wishing to start practice in Estate but barred.

LINK should admit more doctors into Estates, 4 clinics looking after 35000 is simply not enough.

Subject: Re: 發動醫生遊行

Name: Poor GP

Date Posted: Dec 11, 06 - 1:14 PM

Message: In the past, having an estate clinic was like winning the Mark six, protected from high rent and competition from other GPs.

Look at my situation being a private GP, rent rose up 50% per year, has 8 clinics near-by but patient load continues to fall. Some estate clinic's rent will only rise 1/3 per 3 year rental contract, it means it take 9 year before it can be raised double. Why 發動醫生遊行? Can you tell me how much rent/sq feet you are paying?
Lee + X once said the business environment in HK was so bad and he threaten to pull out from HK, but did he?

Subject: Re: 黃大仙下 35000 居民無診所
Name: GP
Date Posted: Dec 13, 06 - 8:59 AM
Message: I will not attend as I think Public Estate doctors are already enjoying a good income.

Subject: Re: Re: 黃大仙下 35000 居民無診所
Name: Poor GP
Date Posted: Dec 13, 06 - 9:08 AM
Message: Do you worry about 黃大仙下 35000 居民無診所 or you will not have income from 黃大仙下 35000 居民 more?
Be honest!

Subject: 反對發動醫生遊行
Name: GP1
Date Posted: Dec 13, 06 - 12:53 PM
Message: The 遊行醫生 are selfish and act on their own benefits.
The name of HKMA should not be there.

Subject: Re: 反對發動醫生遊行
Name: GP44
Date Dec 13, 06 - 3:42 PM

Posted:

Message:

I don't support Dr. Choi because

1) they just fight for their benefit now when the LINK "move" them. Have they thought of making a fight before when the Housing Authority change the estate allocation procedure to tender procedure.

2) The doctor who rent the shop under Housing Authority in the old day has earned sufficient already. They should also be exposed to competition our generation face.

3) DU has do nothing to help private doctor esp those in solo practice. What about the HMO? Have they done anything? DU should be closed!!

Subject: Re: Re: 反對發動醫生遊行

Name: Starving GP

Date Posted: Dec 13, 06 - 5:13 PM

Message: To: LINK management

Express of Interest

Dear Sir,

I wish to register my interest in taking over Dr Choi Kin's clinic should he subsequently give up his clinic space at the Wong Tai Sin Lower Estate.

I would be willing to take up any clinic space assigned by your management.

Starving GP