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The Hong Kong Medical Association

FOUNDED IN 1920-INCORPORATED IN 1960 AS A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE
MEMBER OF WORLD MEDICAL ASSOCIATION AND CONFEDERATION OF MEDICAL ASSOCIATIONS IN ASIA & OCEANIA

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**Views of the Hong Kong Medical Association
on
Public Health and Municipal Services (Amendment) Bill 2008**

All along, food safety has been our concern. People of Hong Kong have every right to expect that food allowed to be sold in the market is safe for consumption. It is just a legitimate expectation for the government to ensure food safety in Hong Kong. However the recent melamine-tainted milk incident did expose the inadequacy of our gate-keeping mechanism. It would be a joke if food found to be unsafe for consumption by health authorities in other countries is still allowed to be sold here in Hong Kong. It is also irresponsible if the government was unable to stop the sale of these alleged food substances. To wait until laboratory proof of toxicity by our own laboratories before taking any action would expose our citizens to unnecessary health hazard. So, in 22 September, soon after the news broke out that quite a substantial number of milk products were tested positive for melamine, our Association had issued a press release statement urging our government to ***“recall any milk or food products in which there is reason to believe that they could have been contaminated with melamine until proven otherwise.”***

We are glad that now the administration is taking an active step to legislate to this effect. We believe this amendment bill can provide adequate power for the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene to exercise his duty to protect public health. We support this amendment bill.

Dr. TSE Hung Hing
President
The Hong Kong Medical Association

Presented at the Bills Committee meeting on 4 December 2008