

“My Health, My Choice”

Healthcare reform second stage public consultation report – comments

United Christian Nethersole Community Health Service (UCN)

8 August 2011

The United Christian Nethersole Community Health Service (UCN) would like to give comments on the healthcare reform second stage report .

The HPS proposal appears detached from the December 2010 Primary care reform strategy document.

1. Health protection scheme needs to be mandatory

The summary of public views concerning health protection scheme shows that the public wants choice and wide coverage of all types of conditions, and inclusive policies for all ages. This entails serious risk pooling and can only be achieved if the whole population subscribes to the scheme, that is, better to make it mandatory from the beginning.

It should also be portable to allow the individual to have continuity of care even with other changing circumstances.

2. Inclusion of Primary care in Health Protection Scheme

UCN once again advocates for inclusion of primary care into the HPS for the following reasons:

2.1 Quality primary care

The effect of good primary care, as demonstrated by numerous overseas studies, is cost-effective and value for money care that improves population health.

2.2 Family doctor concept

As the government is currently also promoting the concept of one family doctor for each person, it is timely and appropriate to include the family doctor services into HPS.

2.3 Prevention of disease is better than cure

The government’s initiatives for disease prevention, such as subsidised vaccination for certain age groups is very encouraging. We recommend broadening the scope of preventive care. The HPS could include some preventive health check services specific for age and gender. Monitoring by government to avoid overuse or abuse is needed.

2.4 Population ageing and the burden of chronic disease

The Hong Kong population is ageing, and with age, there is increasing prevalence of chronic diseases that need management that includes not only medical treatment but also allied health treatment to maintain quality of life. That is, a multi-disciplinary care approach with a care team made up of allied health professionals.

Patients would enjoy quality of life in the community longer if they could access such multidisciplinary services through the HPS.

2.5 Community health center

The government is promoting the concept of Community Health Centre at the moment. Community health centres have an important role in the primary care infrastructure, functioning as a community resource for health information, education and primary care services. In addition, the CHC is an operating base for outreaching/mobile health care service by primary care teams: Reduce burden on fixed health care setting, protect immobile and unreached people eg frail old people, ease of access, prevent onset of major illness or accident. HPS could enable more people to benefit from CHC and facilitate the advancement of this concept.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we find the government healthcare reform and proposal of HPS very encouraging. We urge the government to keep up primary care development in focus as an integral part of reform.