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**Paper for the meeting of the Panel on Health Services
on 16 June 2014**

**Proposal for appointment of a Subcommittee on
Issues Relating to the Development of Chinese Medicine**

Purpose

This paper invites members of the Panel on Health Services ("the Panel") to endorse a proposal for the appointment of a Subcommittee on Issues Relating to the Development of Chinese Medicine ("the Subcommittee") under the Panel, and consider the arrangement for the Subcommittee to commence work.

Background

2. The Chief Executive announced in his 2013 Policy Address the establishment of a Chinese Medicine Development Committee ("the Committee") to give recommendations to the Government concerning the direction and long-term strategy of the future development of Chinese medicine in Hong Kong. Established in February 2013 and chaired by the Secretary for Food and Health, the Committee is tasked to study four key areas, namely the development of Chinese medicine services; personnel training and professional development; research and development; and development of the Chinese medicines industry (including Chinese medicines testing). A Chinese Medicine Practice Sub-committee and a Chinese Medicines Industry Sub-committee were formed under the Committee in May 2013 to study the relevant specific areas.

3. In the 2014 Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced that the Government had accepted the Committee's recommendations and reserved a site located at Pak Shing Kok, Area 78 of Tseung Kwan O, which was

originally earmarked for private hospital development, for setting up a Chinese medicine hospital with 400 beds. It agreed with the Committee's recommendation which preliminarily considered that it would be more feasible for an operating body to run the Chinese medicine hospital on a self-financing basis with integrated Chinese-Western medicine, rather than pure Chinese medicine, as the mode of operation. The Government also accepted the Committee's recommendation that before the establishment of the Chinese medicine hospital, some specific research projects would be carried out to gather experience in the operation and regulation of integrated Chinese-Western medicine and Chinese medicine inpatient services.

4. Issues relating to the development of Chinese medicine services in the public sector, the development and modernization of the Chinese medicines industry, as well as the training for, and employment prospects for graduates of, Chinese medicine practice, are of grave concern to the Panel. Having regard to the latest work of the Government in the promotion of Chinese medicine development on various fronts, the Panel passed a motion at its meeting on 19 May 2014, urging the Government to expeditiously implement the establishment of a Chinese medicine hospital; incorporate the 18 Chinese Medicine Centres for Training and Research (or commonly known as "Chinese medicine clinics") and the Chinese medicine hospital into the public healthcare system to provide them with recurrent funding; formulate a remuneration structure for the Chinese medical grades in the public sector, and expeditiously improve the remuneration packages of graduates of Chinese medicine and pharmacy in Chinese medicine programmes; and set up a dedicated department to provide assistance to the Chinese medicines industry in the process of transformation and promotion, and to take forward the development of the industry. To enable more focused discussion, the Panel agreed at the same meeting that a subcommittee should be formed under the Panel to study issues relating to the development of Chinese medicine.

Proposed terms of reference

5. The proposed terms of reference of the Subcommittee is as follows -

"To study and review the Government's strategy, policies and initiatives to promote the long-term development of Chinese medicine and make timely recommendations."

Proposed work plan

6. The proposed work plan of the Subcommittee is set out in the table below -

Subject	Number of meeting(s)
The role and provision of Chinese medicine services in the public healthcare system	2-3
Development of Chinese medicines industry and support to the trade	2-3
Training and professional development for, and employment prospects of, Chinese medicine practitioners and Chinese medicine pharmacists	1-2
Promotion of evidence-based Chinese medicine practice and testing and certification of Chinese medicines	1-2

7. The number of meetings of each subject can be adjusted in the light of the progress of discussion. Where necessary, the Subcommittee will invite stakeholders and members of the public to give views on specific subjects.

Proposed time frame for completion of work

8. Under rule 26(c) of the House Rules, the Subcommittee is expected to complete its work within 12 months of its commencement and report to the Panel. Should the Subcommittee consider it necessary to work beyond 12 months, the Subcommittee would, after obtaining the endorsement of the Panel, report to the House Committee and give justifications for an extension of the 12-month period.

Proposed arrangements for commencement of work

9. Rule 26(a) of the House Rules specifies that the maximum number of subcommittees on policy issues that may be in operation at any one time is eight. When the quota of eight is reached, any new subcommittees formed will be put on a waiting list, and the House Committee will act as the clearing house for the activation of subcommittee(s) on the list. At its meeting on 15 November 2013, the House Committee adopted two broad principles for activation, operation and extension of period of work of subcommittees on policy issues. It was agreed, among others, that the number of subcommittees under each Panel operating at the same time should not exceed two. For this purpose, a joint subcommittee would be counted as one subcommittee for each of the Panels concerned.

10. At present, the number of subcommittees on policy issues has already reached 10. In the light of this, the Subcommittee will be placed on the waiting list. Two subcommittees on policy issues, namely, the Subcommittee on Strategy and Measures to Tackle Domestic Violence under the Panel on Welfare Services¹ and the Subcommittee to Study the Implementation of Free Kindergarten Education under the Panel on Education², are already on the list. Given that two subcommittees, i.e. the Subcommittee on Health Protection Scheme and the Joint Subcommittee on Long-term Care Policy, are currently operating under the Panel at the same time, there are two options for the Subcommittee to commence its work. The first option is to commence work when the Subcommittee on Health Protection Scheme has completed its work by early November 2014³. The second option is to commence work when the Joint Subcommittee on Long-term Care Policy has completed its work by end of July 2014 and a vacant slot arises upon the completion of work of another subcommittee, other than the Subcommittee on Integrated Education, currently in operation.

¹ Pursuant to the decision made at the House Committee meeting on 15 November 2013 and as agreed by the Panel on Welfare Services at its meeting on 9 December 2013, the Subcommittee on Strategy and Measures to Tackle Domestic Violence will only activate upon the completion of work of the Joint Subcommittee on Long-term Care Policy by end of July 2014.

² Pursuant to members' agreement at the meeting of the Panel on Education on 14 April 2014, the Subcommittee to Study the Implementation of Free Kindergarten Education will only activate upon the completion of work of the Subcommittee on Integrated Education by end of September 2014.

³ In accordance with rule 26(c) of the House Rules, a subcommittee appointed by Panels should complete its work within 12 months of its commencement and report to the relevant Panels. If it is necessary for the subcommittee to work beyond that 12 months, the subcommittee should, after obtaining the endorsement of the relevant Panels, report to the House Committee and give justifications for an extension of the 12-month period. The Subcommittee on Health Protection Scheme, which commenced its work on 12 December 2012, has been given endorsement by the House Committee to complete its work by 3 November 2014.

Advice sought

11. Members are invited to -
 - (a) endorse the appointment of the Subcommittee with the proposed terms of reference, work plan and time frame as set out in paragraphs 5 to 8 above; and
 - (b) consider and decide the arrangement for the Subcommittee to commence work as set out in paragraphs 9 and 10 above.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
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