

**(Summary translation of a letter from the International Association (HK)  
for Chinese Manipulative Medicine proposing the inclusion of  
a functional constituency for Chinese medicine)**

22 March 1999

Regarding the composition of functional constituencies (FCs) in the Legislative Council (Amendment) Bill 1999, the Chinese medicine profession considers it opportune to set up a FC for Chinese medicine (given the introduction of the Chinese Medicine Bill which regulates the practice by Chinese medicine practitioners in Hong Kong and provides for matters relating to their registration). The inclusion of a FC for Chinese medicine enables the profession to be represented in the Legislative Council and recognized by the public. By taking up a role in the Legislative Council, the representative of the profession will serve as a bridge between the profession and the public, and also make contribution in the overall interests of Hong Kong.

(1) Chinese medicine has a history of several thousands of years and is renowned for its comprehensive medical skills and natural therapy (with minimal side effects). Based on its extensive clinical experience, Chinese medicine has effectively protected and contributed to the health of many Chinese nationals. It enjoys a high reputation in the Asian regions as well as in European and American countries, particularly in the US where Chinese medicine practitioners are lawfully licensed to practise in many states. Furthermore, in Australia, medical documents endorsed by licensed Chinese medicine practitioners are accepted for patients to lodge claims for medical insurance.

(2) Chinese medicine in Hong Kong originates from the Mainland. As early as in 1940s and 1950s, 60% of people in Hong Kong were estimated to have consulted Chinese medicine practitioners and taken Chinese medicine. Regrettably, the then colonial government neglected the need of the Chinese people for Chinese medicine, refusing to duly recognize the professional status of Chinese medicine practitioners and cold-shouldering the expertise of the profession. Yet, the Chinese medicine profession still ungrudgingly participated in the fight against the various epidemics previously occurred in Hong Kong.

Now, let bygones be bygones. It is more important to look ahead. Being offspring of the Chinese nation, we must make a concerted effort to nourish the seed of Chinese medicine in Hong Kong.

(3) The Government, members in the profession and the public had worked conscientiously in drafting the law. With their initiatives, Chinese medicine and western medicine are no longer considered mutually exclusive. Chinese medicine is now allowed to develop its potentials and grow freely, thus offering

all citizens in Hong Kong more protection and choices.

(4) In brief, the spirit and the main points of the Chinese Medicine Bill are as follows:

1. To enact legislation on Chinese medicine;
2. To formalize disciplinary powers and provide for related offences;
3. To introduce separate management systems for Chinese medicine practitioners and Chinese medicine;
4. To introduce separate operational procedures for Chinese medicine practitioners and Chinese medicine;
5. To safeguard the interests of people who consult Chinese medicine practitioners and take Chinese medicine;
6. To promote continuing education in Chinese medicine;
7. To encourage scientific research for further development;
8. To establish and standardize the regulatory framework for Chinese medicine practitioners and Chinese medicine;
9. To provide public funds for the profession (In the Policy Address, the Chief Executive stated that development in technology would also cover research studies in Chinese medicine).

The Bill also provides for the establishment of the Chinese Medicine Council of Hong Kong, which comprises representatives from the Government, the public and the profession. Under the Council, there shall be the Chinese Medicine Practitioners Board and the Chinese Medicines Board. Both Boards shall consist representatives of the public in membership to play a monitoring role. It should be noted that the Chinese Medicine Practitioners Board lay much emphasis on examination with a view to upgrading the professional standard of Chinese medicine practitioners. This regulatory framework will ensure professional competency, a sense of responsibility and integrity on the part of practitioners in Chinese medicine.

(5) The Chinese medicine profession welcomes and supports the Chief Executive's commitment in encouraging innovation and technological development in the field, with the ultimate goal of developing Hong Kong into an international centre for Chinese medicine. Hong Kong's economic accomplishments are attributed to the overall cooperation among all citizens, unceasing incentives to explore new markets and diligence of the Hong Kong people. It is hoped that we will uphold this so-called "Hong Kong spirit" and work in concert for a more promising environment for Chinese medicine.

LAM Tai-fu  
Chairman