

Letterhead of HONG KONG CHIROPRACTORS' ASSOCIATION
香港脊骨神經科學會的信頭

02 March 1999

POSITION PAPER OF THE HONG KONG CHIROPRACTORS' ASSOCIATION

ON THE REGISTRATION OF CHIROPRACTORS IN HONG KONG SAR.

The Hong Kong Chiropractors' Association ("HKCA") calls for the immediate implementation of the Registration of all qualified Chiropractors practising in Hong Kong. With the growing influx of unqualified practitioners and the propagation of unethical Chiropractic practice, any further delay to the process will only cause a great disservice to the general public.

RATIONALE

After the enactment of the Chiropractors Registration Ordinance ("the Ordinance") Chap 428 in 1993, the HKCA saw an urgent need for self-regulation while waiting for the Ordinance to be fully implemented. HKCA members were compelled by their professional commitment to provide the general public with quality Chiropractic care according to ethical standards of practice, and by the uncertainty of the public reception of Chiropractic in Hong Kong as fuelled by unfounded negative publicity promulgated to discredit the profession during the last three decades.

During the painstaking campaign to secure the proper legislation, the HKCA realized that the burden to prove that Chiropractic was worthy of its status as a professional healthcare option for the general public was to be borne by the practitioners themselves. Unqualified and unscrupulous Chiropractors would only spell harm for the general public and further disrepute for the profession.

HKCA CODE OF PRACTICE

In 1994, the 38 members of the HKCA (out of 39 practitioners in HK at that time) agreed to formally self-regulate and impose professional discipline by adopting the proposed Code of Practice of the Chiropractors Council. During a general meeting, this proposed Code was ratified by majority vote to become the HKCA Code of Practice.

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MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

The members of the HKCA also agreed to formalize the academic requirements for membership that would be based on different sets of criteria depending on the country from where the applicant received his/her Chiropractic degree. The HKCA admission requirements are to be constantly upgraded according to the improvements made by the Chiropractic regulatory bodies of the different countries. The HKCA implemented updated admission requirements in order to bar unqualified Chiropractors from becoming members.

THE ORGANIZATION

In order to protect its credibility as a fair organization, the HKCA operates very transparently in all its aspects including membership admission, Code of Practice issues and disciplinary proceedings, finances, conduct of officers, public education programmes and consultancy activities. The democratic participation of members in a one-member-one-vote equal-opportunity system on all policy issues including the election of officers is safeguarded and has been a cornerstone of the HKCA since its founding in 1967. The HKCA currently represents 43 out of the 48 Chiropractors practising here.

NON-MEMBERS

In the last six years, the number of Chiropractors practicing in Hong Kong has increased by 50% from 32 in 1993 to 48 in February 1999. Until early 1998, the HKCA could safely vouch that the professional standard of Chiropractic practice in Hong Kong closely adhered to the prescriptions of the Code of Practice including that of the only one non-member Chiropractor. However, there is now a growing number of non-member practitioners and the HKCA is keenly aware that it can not impose the Code of Practice on them nor can it stop unqualified and unethical Chiropractors from practising in Hong Kong.

Recently, four non-member Chiropractors have been highly critical of the HKCA and had written in protest to the Chiropractors Council, the Health and Welfare Branch and to some members of the Legislative Council. These non-members

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were either expelled from the HKCA for repeated violations and vehement disregard for the Code of Practice, or were refused membership on the grounds of the lack of academic qualifications, or were refused membership on the grounds of a background of criminal conviction and the lack of moral integrity. These Chiropractors continue to practice and treat patients in Hong Kong. Who is to stop them?

LAST RESORT

There is a proposal included in the Registration Criteria of the Chiropractors Council that requires a character reference from the HKCA for Chiropractors who have been practicing in Hong Kong prior to the full implementation of Registration. The members of the HKCA gladly welcomed this as it would have represented the recognition of the will of the profession to self-regulate in the interim whilst Government regulation is not yet fully implemented.

This proposal is now being questioned as giving the HKCA undue influence in the Registration process. If 43 out of the 48 Chiropractors practising in Hong Kong have in the past five years worked and practised in compliance with internationally accepted qualifications and the same Code of Practice that is proposed by the Chiropractors Council then why is this influence being faulted? Clearly the compliance of the 43 HKCA members with standard and ethical professional practice is an act of responsible citizens done in the best interest of the general public and of the profession to which they belong.

If the Government and the Legislative Council deem that the active participation of HKCA members in their Registration process as unsuitable, then they must do all they can to implement the Chiropractors Registration without further delay. The onus to secure that Hong Kong will not be flooded with unqualified and unethical Chiropractic practitioners can no longer be shared by the HKCA.