

For Discussion  
on 10 January 2000

## **Control of unregistered pharmaceutical products**

### **Background**

At the Health Panel meeting held on 8.2.1999, Members were informed that the Pharmacy and Poisons Board would formulate measures to tighten the control on the import of unregistered pharmaceutical products for re-export.

### **Progress**

2. At its meeting of 10.2.1999, the Pharmacy and Poisons Board (the Board) considered the feedback received from the pharmaceutical trade who had been consulted on the various proposed measures to avoid the illegal sale of unregistered pharmaceutical products. The Board also consulted the views of the Trade Department and the Customs and Excise Department, which were the relevant licensing and enforcement authorities. Both the Trade Department and the Customs and Excise Department supported enhanced import control. On 9 June 1999, having considered the feedback and suggestions from the trade and the above two government departments, the Pharmacy and Poisons Board decided that an importer wishing to bring unregistered pharmaceutical products into Hong Kong for re-export purposes should satisfy one of the following 2 conditions:

- (a) Production of a letter of authorization from the manufacturer allowing the importer to bring the product into Hong Kong for re-export purposes.
- (b) Application for import licence must be accompanied by application for export licence for same, together with production of documentary evidence, such as a purchase order or a Letter of Credit, to show that the unregistered pharmaceutical product to be imported will actually be re-exported.

3. To allow time for traders to prepare for the new arrangements, the Board has decided to grant a grace period of nine

months for implementation of the above requirement. All applications for re-export should satisfy the above conditions with effect from 15 April 2000.

4. Since then, we have received further feedback from the trade questioning whether satisfying only one of the conditions in paragraph 2 will be sufficient in deterring the import of unregistered pharmaceutical products into Hong Kong. We consider that satisfying condition (a) alone would not be adequate as there may be manufacturers whom we have little knowledge of. The Pharmacy and Poisons Board will, at its next meeting on 24.1.2000, further consider these feedback and determine the most appropriate way forward.

5. Members are invited to give their advice on this matter.

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Health & Welfare Bureau  
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