

立法會
Legislative Council

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**Bills Committee on
Dentists Registration (Amendment) Bill 2005**

Background Brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat

Purpose

This paper summarises the issues and concerns raised by the Panel on Health Services (the Panel) on the Administration's proposed amendments to the Dentist Registration Ordinance (the Ordinance) (Cap. 156) to establish a Specialist Register for registered dentists qualified in various specialist fields of dentistry and an Education and Accreditation Committee (EAC).

Background

2. The Ordinance provides for a legislative framework for the registration of dental practitioners in Hong Kong as well as the administration and governing of their professional practice and conduct. The Dental Council of Hong Kong (HKDC) set up under the Ordinance has been granting specialist titles to qualified registered dentists through administrative arrangements since its establishment in 1959. At present, dentists who have been awarded a Fellowship in dental surgery by the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine (HKAM) or of equivalent status and have complied with the continuing education requirement set by the HKAM may be accredited as specialists and be authorised to use a specialist title.
3. The names of the dentists granted with a specialist title are included in a non-statutory specialist list maintained by the HKDC. The list is made available on the HKDC's homepage on the Internet for public information.
4. As the current administrative arrangement lacks legal backing and fails to provide clarity and certainty on the requirements and procedures to become specialists, the Administration proposes to -
 - (a) establish a Specialist Register in the Ordinance to provide a firm legal basis for the accreditation arrangements;

- (b) set up a statutory EAC to handle matters relating to the Specialist Register and specialists; and
- (c) impose more stringent sanction against unauthorised use of specialist titles by making the act a criminal offence rather than a professional misconduct.

Deliberations of the Panel on Health Services

5. The Administration consulted the Panel on the proposed amendments to the Ordinance at its meeting on 14 March 2005.

6. Members expressed support for the proposed amendments. A member asked whether the proposed specialist registration system would create problems of transitional arrangements for existing specialist dentists. The Administration responded that there should not be any serious transitional problems. Under the present administrative arrangement, there were currently 107 registered dentists accredited with specialist titles by the Council and 99 of them were Fellows of the HKAM. The Administration considered that it would be reasonable to include them in the Specialist Register and allow them to continue to use the specialist designation after the new legislative amendments were in place.

7. A member was of the view that a general review of the Ordinance to improve the existing regulatory regime for the dental profession was long overdue. The Administration agreed that the provisions of the Ordinance needed to be updated. Subject to the views of the relevant quarters of the profession on the details of changes to the legislation, the Administration intended to commence a general review of the Ordinance in 2006. At the member's request, the Administration agreed to provide an information paper summarising the issues which had been considered by HKDC in its previous review of the Ordinance for the Panel's reference.

8. As requested at the meeting on 14 March 2005, a supplementary information paper was provided by the Administration in October 2005 on the major proposals made by the HKDC in its previous review of the Ordinance. The Administration advised that it would consider the appropriate timing to take forward the other proposals of the HKDC upon enactment of the proposed amendments in relation to the establishment of the Specialist Register.

Relevant papers

9. Members are invited to access the LegCo website (<http://www.legco.gov.hk>) to view the minutes of meeting of the Panel held on 14 March 2005, the supplementary information paper provided by the Administration referred to in

paragraph 8 above (LC Paper No. CB(2)219/05-06(01)), and the LegCo Brief on the Bill issued by the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau on 29 June 2005.

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