



香港執業藥劑師協會
THE PRACTISING PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION OF HONG KONG
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Date: June 21st 2006

Dr. Hon Kwok Ka Ki
Member
Legislative Council
HKSAR

Re: Extension of the Hospital Authority Drug Delivery Services on Drug Formulary
Self- Finance Items

I write this letter on behalf of the Practising Pharmacists Association of Hong Kong – a professional organisation that represents over 440 odd community pharmacists working in the independent pharmacies, the Hong Kong General Chamber of Pharmacy and the two major chain stores; namely Mannings Dairy Farm Company Ltd and Watsons the Chemists, a division of A S Watson Group (HK) Ltd.

I wish to draw your attention, as a learned and responsible member of the Hospital Authority (HA) Medical Services Development Committee (MSDC), to the concerns we have at large on the HA engagement in the set up and operation of a private enterprise, in the supply of Self Finance Items (SFIs) as a means to generate income within the hospital pharmacies.

Our Association has written a letter to Mr. Shane Solomon on March 19th 2006 and then another letter jointly with various stakeholders in the community to Mr. Anthony Wu on May 12th 2006 to express our concerns on this subject but until now it seemed that our voices have been ignored. (encl 1,2)

For your information, our Association has also organised a press conference on May 30th 2006 with The Pharmaceutical Society of Hong Kong (PSHK) and The Hong Kong Medical Association (HKMA) to draw the attention from the public about the obvious conflict of interests for the HA, as a public organisation to engage itself in the sale of SFIs which will definitely worsen the current imbalance of private-public health services and the eventual monopoly of the entire Hong Kong medical and pharmaceutical market as a result of “unfair competition” and “non-competition”. (encl 3)

In view of the above reasons and the unfairness in competition created in our healthcare system by the HA, three separate letters have been sent to the Consumer

Council, the Office of the Ombudsman Hong Kong and the Equal Opportunity Commission on June 7th 2006 to draw their attention to the matter. (encl 4,5,6)

In addition, the Hong Kong Retail Management Association also issued a letter to Mr. Shane Solomon on June 16th 2006 to question the legal authority for the HA to operate such private dispensaries. It is necessary to point out that by promoting these sales in the HA and then putting the profit gained from such operations would also subject the doctors working in the HA to “perceived conflict of interests”. (encl 7)

We understand that there is a genuine need for the patients to have convenient access to purchase these SFIs at assured quality and at reasonable drug prices (the survey in encl 8) however there can be other options to meet this need e.g. this service can be contracted out to reputable providers from outside the HA. Under such circumstances, we are eager to work in partnership with the HA to introduce this kind of service. This option would definitely be more cost effective than for the HA to engage itself in these sales.

So far, there is no mention by the HA about the actual cost of investment in the setting up and operating costs on sales of SFIs. There is also no mention of the system that must be put in place to enable the public to monitor how the amount of revenue, if indeed there is, generated from the selling of SFIs can be ploughed back to benefit the patients to support the safety net and new drugs items as promised by the HA.

We wish to draw to your attention on the whole issue so that you are informed completely on the matter of our concerns in the hope that the MSDC members would not support the HA to engage in an initiative that will destroy the public-private interface. Lastly, it is worth reminding that the HA should focus its resources on emergency services, catastrophic illnesses and the generally unaffordable high tech lifesaving procedures and serving those of limited means and on training of professionals.

We look forward to receiving your positive support.

Yours faithfully,

Billy Chung Wing-ming
President
The Practising Pharmacists Association of Hong Kong

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