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The Hong Kong Medical Association

FOUNDED IN 1920-INCORPORATED IN 1960 AS A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE
MEMBER OF WORLD MEDICAL ASSOCIATION AND CONFEDERATION OF MEDICAL ASSOCIATIONS IN ASIA & OCEANIA

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HKMA Stand on Nutrition Labelling

Nutrition labelling is important in that it helps the consumer to make an informed choice. This is especially so for patients with chronic diseases, the elderly, pregnant women and children who need to adjust the consumption level of certain nutrients for the sake of maintaining good health. Standardization of nutrition labelling prevents confusion and makes it easier for consumers to make comparisons.

In response to the Government's effort in realizing food nutrition labelling, the Hong Kong Medical Association maintains the following stand:

The basic principle for nutrition labelling should be: when the component in question is present in excessive amount would be hazardous to health, then it should be mandatory labeled. If a claim is made on any nutrients, then the information should be accurate, clear and must not be misleading.

We support the government's initial proposal as promulgated in its consultation document back in 2003. We also suggest that potassium and trans fat should also be included in the list of core nutrients to be mandatory labelled, making a total of energy plus 11 nutrients.

The original consultation document had excluded infant formula and food from the nutrition labelling scheme. We believed that unless this category of pre-packaged food has already been regulated by other labelling legislations, it should not be excluded from this scheme.

The unit for indication and comparison should be standardized. Composition of the nutrients should be expressed in "per 100 grams" for solid and "per 100 ml" for liquid. Indication by "per serving" is optional. In addition, the net weight or net volume of the package has to be indicated too and the unit has to be the same as the nutrition information.

The nutrition information labeled on the packaging should be printed in both Chinese **AND** English.

Pre-packaged food sold through e-trading had to be regulated as well.

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