

Petition of the HKCA on

**Recognition of sick leave certification issued by registered chiropractors
as a valid medical certificate under the Employment Ordinance Cap 57**

Presented to Legco Panel on Manpower on 17 Jun 2011

Good morning Mr Chairman and Honorable Members.

I am Dr Henry Chan, President of the Hongkong Chiropractors' Association

The Hong Kong Chiropractors' Association appreciates the Labour Department's 6-year effort to determine whether medical certificates issued by chiropractors should be recognized under the labour legislation. Their in-depth study served to identify the inadequacies of local chiropractic services:

- that the public has limited knowledge about chiropractic health services;
- that there is low utilization and demand for chiropractic treatment in Hong Kong;
- that all chiropractors are in private practice, and there are no local tertiary institutions providing chiropractic training; and
- that there are differences in the approaches adopted by different countries in dealing with chiropractic practice.

The HKCA is disappointed that as a result of this study, the Labour Department is recommending against the proposal and suggests, as the way forward, to continue communicating with stakeholders, monitoring chiropractic developments and to conduct a comprehensive survey.

While maintaining this way forward, the Government is ignoring 2 important facts -

- that functional neuromusculoskeletal disorders such as low back pain, neck pain and headache affect millions of people in Hongkong, and
- that for these disorders, there is significant scientific evidence today to show that chiropractic is effective, safe, and cost-effective treatment. Chiropractic is well-proven to save money for all stakeholders in cutting millions of dollars in healthcare spending.

The HKCA believes that the Government should actively address the findings of the Labour Department's study by,

1 Where there is limited knowledge and under-utilization of chiropractic health services, the Government must launch an intensive public health education campaign to inform everybody about the well-proven benefits of chiropractic health services.

2 When all chiropractors are in private practice, the Government should expand the availability of chiropractic services to the public health sector, including the public hospitals and outpatient clinics. This would improve the economic efficiency of Government-funded healthcare delivery to the general public, providing timely relief of its financial burden.

3 When there are no tertiary institutions providing chiropractic training in Hong Kong, the Government should establish a chiropractic educational programme to educate and train more chiropractors to serve the general public locally. And

4 When there are differences in the approaches adopted by different countries in dealing with chiropractic practice, it must be recognized that different countries have different market conditions, which call for unique solutions that benefit their citizens best. A responsible, proactive and prudent government should provide what is proven to be beneficial for its citizens, and take active measures to increase local utilization and availability of these beneficial services, in this case, chiropractic health services.

In summary, the HKCA urges the Legco Panel on Manpower and the Government to seriously consider the health and economic benefits that chiropractic health services can provide our community, and to take immediate steps to support the wider utilization and availability of these services.

The Government proposals on the way forward, including conducting a comprehensive survey, would be futile and a waste of public resources, as they are not concrete measures to address the issues brought to light by the study.

The HKCA urges the Government to

- 1 **launch an intensive public health education campaign about the well-proven benefits of chiropractic treatment.**
- 2 **expand the availability of chiropractic health services to the public hospitals and outpatient clinics,** and
- 3 **establish a local chiropractic educational programme.**

The HKCA believes that with this approach, the Government would be helping millions of local citizens who suffer low back pain, neck pain and headache. It would save millions of dollars in healthcare spending, and provide *greater benefit for the local community*.

Thank you.

Dr Henry HK Chan
President
Hong Kong Chiropractors' Association

**在僱傭條例(香港法例第57章)下
認可註冊脊醫簽發的病假證明為合法的醫生證明書**

早晨主席和各位人力事務委員會委員、我系香港脊醫學會代表、陳顯強

香港脊醫學會(學會)歡迎勞工署、以六年時間研究有關在勞工法例下承認由脊醫所簽發醫生證明書的報告。

勞工署工作小組研究報告中很詳盡指出有關方面的主體問題：

- 1 市民、僱主、僱員、和保險業人士對脊醫診治認識不深、
- 2 香港市民對脊醫診治的認受性和應用率低、
- 3 所有香港註冊脊醫均在私人市場執業、香港並沒有提供脊醫訓練的本地專上學院、和
- 4 因不同國家對承認由脊醫所簽發的醫生證明書取向有很大的差異、工作小組認為應採取較審慎的態度。

研究報告書中並提出有關最後未來路向的建、繼續與各相關人士保持溝通、留意香港和海外脊醫的最新發展、及進行一項更全面的調查、以評估脊醫治療在本港的普及程度。但學會對政府的建議、認為現時沒有充份理據承認脊醫簽發的醫生證明書、深表遺憾。

學會認為政府在未來路向上的取向、完全忽略了以下兩點：

- 神經—肌肉—骨骼系統的功能性疾病、例如腰背痛、頸痛及頭痛等的極普遍性、和
- 衆多醫學研究報告中証實脊醫診治對極普遍的神經—肌肉—骨骼系統的功能性疾病、例如腰背痛、頸痛及頭痛等治療的安全、有效和合乎成本效益可為政府、市民、僱主、僱員帶來龐大的醫療經濟收益。

學會認為政府首先應作出正面、並積極地針對研究報告中的主體問題、

1 政府應立刻對脊醫診治因認識不深、認受性和應用率低的問題、對相關人士展開宣傳和推廣有關脊醫診治已証實的效益。

2 對所有香港註冊脊醫均在私人市場執業的問題、政府首要便是立刻把脊醫納入在醫院管理局、公營醫療門診服務中。這樣不特可以對所需病假及工傷仲裁提供多一份獨立專業醫學意見、更能另市民可直接獲得脊醫有效診治的服務。

3 對香港並沒有提供脊醫訓練的本地專上學院的問題、政府應積極推行在本地專上學院提供脊醫訓練、為市民提供更多的專業脊醫服務、增加脊醫診治的應用率及普及性。

4 因不同國家對承認由脊醫所簽發的醫生證明書取向有很大的差異、工作小組認為應採取較審慎的態度。一個負責任、積極主動和審慎的政府、應針對本地的需求、積極謂市民推行、增加脊醫診治應用和供應。

總結

香港脊醫學會、促請立法局人力事務委員會成員和政府、慎重考慮脊醫治療可帶給市民、勞方、及資方的醫療及經濟效益、支持脊醫治療的長遠發展、推廣脊醫診治。

政府多作一項調查、保持溝通和採取較審慎的態度、是不能解決市民不能直接得到脊醫治療、也不能解決市民對脊醫診治缺乏認識、需求和應用、更不能解決在本地專上學院提供脊醫訓練的問題。

學會認為政府應首要的未來路向便是、

1 作出正面、積極、以實際行動宣傳和推廣有關脊醫診治已証實的效益。另市民對脊醫診治的認受性有所轉變。

2 應盡快將脊醫治療納入公營醫療體系中、在公立醫院增設脊醫診治門診服務。為市民提供一個真正的多元性醫療選擇和落實一體化醫療體系。讓脊醫治療服務可以普及另市民直接得益、為政府、市民、僱主、僱員帶來龐大的醫療及經濟收益。

3 協助業界將脊醫培訓納入專上學院中、為未來承認脊醫簽發醫生證明書建立起一個平台、讓市民盡快直接獲得脊醫有效和合成本效益的診治。

學會相信這未來路向才是一個負責任政府所應做的。

香港脊醫學會
會長 陳顯強