



**Subcommittee on
Public Revenue Protection (Dutiable Commodities) Order 2011**
Written submission by the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine

Dear Chairman and LegCo Members,

We would like to express our unreserved support for the Government to increase tobacco duty by 41.5% as announced by the Financial Secretary on 23 February this year.

Tobacco kills one in every two long-term users. According to a local study, 6,900 people in Hong Kong died due to smoking every year. The latest Thematic Household Survey estimated there are 690,000 daily smokers in Hong Kong. Smoking is one of the leading risk factors for developing various deadly diseases such as ischaemic heart diseases, stroke, emphysema and lung cancers. These diseases not only cause significant number of deaths but also result in chronic disability requiring long term rehabilitative care and loss of productivity. A conservative estimate of the total societal cost of tobacco-related disease for health care and productivity losses is HK\$5.3 billion.

In 2007/08, the Thematic Household Survey showed that over 300,000 smokers (nearly half of the smoking population) indicated that they wanted to give up smoking. Nicotine induced physical dependence of the smokers. Increasing tobacco tax is known to be the most effective public health measure to reduce smoking prevalence by preventing youth to take up smoking and provide a strong incentive to quit.

The Hong Kong Academy of Medicine (HKAM) has been supporting the Government's initiatives in curbing the tobacco epidemic ever since its establishment. In November 2010, the Academy, in conjunction with its 15 Colleges, adopted the 'Charter for Promoting Management of Tobacco Dependence' with the support from the Department of Health. The Charter demonstrated HKAM's strong commitment to tackle the tobacco epidemic in all fronts. HKAM and the Department of Health will be jointly organizing smoking cessation training courses for specialists and health care professionals. Online learning resources will be developed to update medical practitioners on the management of tobacco dependence.

Raising tobacco tax will save lives and health care costs for Hong Kong.

Prof. Raymond Liang
President

30 March 2011