

Professor Honorable Joseph Lee Kok-long
Chairman
Bills Committee on Pharmacy and Poisons (Amendment) Bill 2014

20 May 2014

Dear Professor Honorable Joseph Lee & Members of the Bills Committee,

Re: Pharmacy and Poisons (Amendment) Bill 2014

On behalf of the Chinese University of Hong Kong - School of Pharmacy, College of Pharmacy Practice, Society of the Hospital Pharmacists and the University of Hong Kong, we would like to provide this joint statement to express our views for the amendments of the Pharmacy and Poison Ordinance and Regulations. Medication safety has been the top priority of the pharmacy profession. The medication incidents happened in 2009 should be avoided and never be observed. Therefore, the amendments of the dated ordinance and regulations are necessary and important. The ultimate purpose of the Pharmacy and Poison ordinance and regulations are for the protection of our citizens and to ensure medication safety. In general, we support the intentions of amending some of the dated laws to improve the regulations of pharmaceutical services. However, there are several areas that we would like the members of the bill committee to carefully consider and thoroughly discuss.

1. The Establishment of Pharmacy Council to regulate the Professional Development of Pharmacists

The development of the code of practice for pharmacists is reasonable and necessary. However, an independent body should conduct the regulations of the code of practice rather than the same body which the law and regulations are set. Our fellow medical and nursing colleagues have established their medical and nursing councils to observe and regulate the professional development of physicians and nurses. Therefore, the same should be executed for pharmacists. As a result, we would like the bill committee to support the incorporation of the establishment of Pharmacy Council in the amendment bill.

2. Expansion of roles of pharmacists in Primary Care

We are delighted to see that the government values primary care and established the primary care office for better improve healthcare of our citizens. However, we are disappointed to see that the

primary care office did not include pharmacists to partake in promoting primary care in Hong Kong. Therefore, we would like the bill committee to consider including primary care as part of the duties of pharmacists.

3. Full coverage by a licensed pharmacist during the operation hours of a pharmacy (Authorised Sellers of Poison)

Appropriate drug use requires the expertise of pharmacists to provide monitoring and education of patients. It is not reasonable and not acceptable when clinics not attended by physicians and police stations not attended by policemen. Therefore, it is not acceptable for the pharmacy sections where the drugs and poisons are stored not to be attended by pharmacists. Although it is true that we have a high patients-to-pharmacists ratio in Hong Kong, it is important and essential that pharmacists are the gatekeepers to ensure medication safety by staffing in the pharmacy sections during the operation hours of the authorised sellers of poison. This was recommended by the review committee as one of the 75 recommendations and should be considered and included in the current bill.

4. Establishment of Pharmacovigilance Monitoring Platform

Currently, there is no mandatory reporting of adverse drug events. It is important for pharmacists to work with patients and other healthcare professionals to ensure proper reporting of adverse drug events. The purpose of the pharmacy and poison ordinance is set to ensure medication safety and protect our citizens. Therefore, mandatory reporting of adverse drug events should be included in the bill to avoid future incidents of undesirable drug-related outcomes and to decrease preventable hospitalisations and casualty.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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Benjamin SC Lee, President, College of Pharmacy Practice, Hong Kong

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