



**HONG KONG PHYSIOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION LIMITED**  
**香港物理治療學會有限公司**

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19 Jun 2017

Dr. Joseph LI  
Chairman  
Legislative Council Panel on Health Services  
Hong Kong

**By Email**

Dear Dr. Joseph LI,

**Re: Feedback on the Strategic Review on HealthCare Manpower Planning  
& Professional Development - Physiotherapists**

In response to the captioned to be released on 14 Jun 2017, the Hong Kong Physiotherapy Association (HKPA) would reflect our **views on the manpower planning and professional development for physiotherapists** to the Panel members as below:

1. We, in principle, **welcome the Government taking the initiation for manpower planning and projection** & the professional development and regulation. This facilitates a more matched workforce with modernized regulatory system for a more sustainable healthcare system in Hong Kong. In addition, the manpower projection will be **an ongoing process for a timely reassessment on the supply and demand projection** with the next projection exercise to be started in second half of 2017 for the 2019/20 – 2021/22 triennium.
2. **Factors taken into account in the manpower projection model**
  - 2.1. It is well understood that the different demand factors have been incorporated in the



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HKU's demand model listed as stipulated on page 18. However, there is a **possibility in underestimation of the demand requirement of physiotherapists** in Hong Kong:

- ◆ The Manpower Projection was conducted based on the existing service model, undesirable manpower establishment, high workload of frontline physiotherapists and long waiting time for access to public healthcare services.
- ◆ Nowadays, no manpower ratio or senior to junior ratio is available in both hospital and non-government organization (NGO) settings. Even worse, the professional supervision, training opportunities, job exposure and career pathway are not well established in the NGO settings resulting in high staff turn-over and staff retention issue.
- ◆ Only parameters on patient attendance or number of treatment sessions are used for benchmarking and performance monitoring, without considering quality domains.
- ◆ The role of physiotherapists in primary care and community care for the elderly has not been well established in Hong Kong but there is evolving evidence in maintaining the elderly healthy & safe in the community.

2.2 Therefore, **we suggest adding in the below factors in the upcoming projection exercise** for improving quality of physiotherapy provisions:

- ◆ **Setting up and adding in manpower ratio and senior to junior ratio**
- ◆ **Resources for strengthening the training, job exposure by rotation and structured career pathway in NGO settings;**
- ◆ **Changing elderly care model with enhanced role of physiotherapists in the primary and community care;**
- ◆ **Benchmarking-making the physiotherapist to population ratio with other developed countries, such as the 1 physiotherapist: 1,344 in the United Kingdom with similar health care system as in Hong Kong**

### 3. Self-financing training places

In view of the stringent physiotherapist manpower shortage in Hong Kong (933 physiotherapist-shortage in Year 2030), the Report only recommends to increase the training program offered by the self-financing sector, instead of increasing public-funded training places. We **have great reservation on the stability of graduate availability from the self-financed training places**. Anatomy laboratory, physiology laboratory and practical rooms are required for physiotherapy undergraduate training. Thus, the most efficient and



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effective way to increase training places for coping with the shortage has to be implemented in the existing academic institutions with such facilities provision, such as the University of Hong Kong and Chinese University of Hong Kong with medical faculties. Moreover, the course fee of the self-financed course will be costly and less affordable by the public. Furthermore, the accreditation criteria for the self-financed course are not transparent to be followed and the accreditation can only be conducted after the completion of the course. Therefore, the undergraduates may have completed a course which finally cannot be eligible for statutory registration by the Physiotherapist Board of Hong Kong.

**4. Reform of Physiotherapists Board of Hong Kong**

We urged that physiotherapists have to be given a presiding role in the Physiotherapists Board of Hong Kong. In addition, we agree that an involvement of lay membership will improve the transparency for further enhancement in professional development and quality assurance.

We look forward to have a meeting with you and relevant parties if possible to express our views and concerns for the public interests for your better understanding.

Yours truly,

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Ms. Priscilla POON  
President  
Hong Kong Physiotherapy Association

cc:  
Secretariat, Steering Committee on Strategic Review on Healthcare Manpower Planning and Professional Development