



香港藥學會

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PSHK response to Healthcare Manpower Review Report

The Government has just released the Report on Strategic Review on Healthcare Manpower Planning and Professional Development. It is predicted that there will be over supply of pharmacists in the future. Under the current healthcare policy, pharmacists are underutilized and The Pharmaceutical Society of Hong Kong (PSHK) hopes that the Government will review its policy to enable pharmacists to take up much more expanded roles to help improve the healthcare system in Hong Kong.

Our local pharmacy graduates have more clinical skills than ever before, but they are not always able to take full advantage of their skills. With the aging of the population, more clinics and hospitals are needed and increased demand for good medication and pharmaceutical care.

Our public hospital should create more posts for clinical pharmacists and ward pharmacists to conduct medication review upon admission, during hospital stay and upon leaving the hospitals. This can relieve the workload of the doctors and nurses and reduce the number of poly pharmacy, drug interactions and optimize medication therapy for the patients. They can also focus on care transitions. Transitioning patients from one care setting to another is a vulnerable time, which requires improvement. Community and hospital pharmacists are valuable allies for reducing the risks associated with transitions, especially those back to the nursing home. They can actively be involved in transition care.

We hope that the Government will take the lead in pursuing a public-private partnership (PPP) programme to send chronic drugs from public hospital to community pharmacies and not to distribute them in the public hospitals. This will reduce the waiting time in the public hospitals and allow community pharmacists to provide better counseling to patients.

With community pharmacies being the most accessible primary healthcare destinations, there is a tremendous opportunity to deliver great health outcomes for the citizens of Hong Kong.

- Elderly residents in old aged homes are poly pharmacy and are more likely to suffer from adverse effects of medicines which can lead to otherwise preventable hospital admissions. As medicine experts, community pharmacists have a big contribution to make in improving

medicines management in old aged homes (OAHs). Medication reviews, medication reconciliation and medicines use reviews play an important role to reduce poly pharmacy, adverse drug reactions and improving adherence, meaning to improve the quality of life for the elderly residents and reduce hospitalizations and cost of the healthcare system.

- Home medicine reviews are also a service pharmacists can provide, which involves a pharmacist, referred by a general physician, to visit a patient in their home and review their medications. This service has already been applied in many countries including Canada, US, and Australia.

- Immunization and vaccination of Influenza and Herpes Vaccine Vaccination currently is offered in Singapore Guardian Pharmacy which provide pharmacist to assess allergies before nurse's vaccination. Other countries such as Canada, UK, Australia and the United States allow pharmacists to vaccinate Influenza Vaccines and other selected diseases. This can greatly enhance the vaccination of patients in the community and long term care. This should be pharmacist's new role in the near future.

Pharmacists can provide specialized care for people with high risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease. There have been such practices, including lipid screening, blood glucose testing and blood pressure tests. A number of pharmaceutical services have been carried out worldwide.

In the United States, Medication therapy management (MTM) is medical care provided by pharmacists whose aim is to optimize drug therapy and improve therapeutic outcomes for patients. Medication therapy management includes a broad range of professional activities, including but not limited to performing patient assessment and/or a comprehensive medication review, formulating a medication treatment plan, monitoring efficacy and safety of medication therapy, enhancing medication adherence through patient empowerment and education, and documenting and communicating MTM services to prescribers in order to maintain comprehensive patient care.

All of the above pharmaceutical services can enhance medication safety and reduce hospital admissions and should be developed in Hong Kong. PSHK has been organizing different continuous professional education (CPD) programme to enhance the professional knowledge of our pharmacists. We will continue with our effort on CPD programme to equip our pharmacists for these new and expanded roles. We hope that the government will sit down with our professional societies and stakeholders to develop a plan to implement and reimburse the services of pharmacists for the above services. With all these initiatives, the government should regular review the balance between professional service demand and the supply situation of pharmacist for better manpower planning in the future.