



27 June 2017

Prof Hon Joseph Lee Kok Long, SBS, JP
Chairman to Panel on Health Services
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

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Dear Prof Hon Joseph Lee Kok Long, SBS, JP,
Re: Report on Strategic Review on Healthcare Manpower Planning and Professional Development

The Hong Kong Chiropractors Association (HKCA) would like to further comment on the data presented on the captioned report, specifically the section on the demand and supply of chiropractors.

1. Chiropractors Demand 3.8.13.1

HKCA feels that a utilization-based approach based on the Health Manpower Survey (HMS) and the Thematic Household Survey (THS) cannot truly reflect the demand of Chiropractors in Hong Kong.

In the HMS, the only data regarding patient utilization is the number of consultation/patient a chiropractor sees per working day. Public demand would depend on multiple factors, such as the patient's knowledge of Chiropractic healthcare services, whether existing ailments can best be treated by Chiropractors, health insurance coverage, the recognition of sick leave certifications and disability worker's compensation. The method employed by the HMS is too simplistic to represent the true demand of Chiropractors in Hong Kong.



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In the THS, a significant limitation was noted in the latest 2013 survey since, “some respondents might not be able to identify whether the chiropractors concerned were registered chiropractors in Hong Kong during the interview.” This would jeopardize the validity of the data to reflect true demand of Chiropractors in Hong Kong.

2. Externalities / Policy Interventions and Direct policy - induced demand

As chiropractic healthcare is only available in the private sector, there is no government policy concerning chiropractic practice in the public sector. There is yet to see any active endorsement by the authority to the proven, evidence-based health benefits of chiropractic care to encourage the use of such services that is only available in the private sector. Therefore, there is very low or even zero “direct policy-induced demand” of chiropractors. To use this data as a demand factor for chiropractors in Hong Kong, would be irrelevant and misleading.

Future direction to properly address the demand and supply of Chiropractors in Hong Kong

HKCA feels that the captioned report must take the above considerations into account when presenting it to the Government of the HKSAR for the future planning of healthcare policy, in order not to be misled by the projection of the present report in reflecting that there will be an over-supply and under-demand of chiropractors in Hong Kong.

HKCA maintains that the demand and supply of chiropractors in Hong Kong hinges on whether the Government of the HKSAR, Legco and stakeholders understand and accept that chiropractic care as a unique form of treatment is scientifically proven to be an effective, safe, and cost-effective treatment for functional neuromusculoskeletal disorders, such as



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low back pain, neck pain and headache, which are so commonly affecting the general public. We further believe that given Hong Kong's current prohibitive public healthcare expenditure, it would be advantageous for the Government of the HKSAR to seriously consider utilizing effective and cost-effective healthcare options, such as chiropractic treatment versus medical treatment for functional neuromusculoskeletal disorders.

Therefore, the reality testing that puts true meaning to reflect the demand and supply of chiropractors, is in the Government of the HKSAR and Legco to seriously consider the benefits that chiropractic services can provide for our community, to concretely address the true issue of supply and demand of chiropractors, and staunchly support wider utilization and availability of chiropractic healthcare services by:

- a. launching an intensive public health education campaign to inform all stakeholders about chiropractic treatment as proven effective, safe and cost-effective treatment for common functional neuromusculoskeletal disorders, such as low back pain, neck pain and headache;
- b. expanding the availability of chiropractic services to the public sector including the public hospitals and outpatient clinics, and
- c. establishing a chiropractic educational programme to educate and train chiropractors locally.

Conclusion

HKCA hopes that the above has shown convincingly the shortcomings of the captioned report and not to be misled by the projection of the present review, in reflecting that there is a short term equilibrium and medium term sufficient supply and demand of Chiropractors locally, when planning for future health policy in HKSAR. Otherwise, the general public will be



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deprived of the benefits of a proven effective and cost-effective chiropractic healthcare service.

Furthermore, we feel that the Government of the HKSAR and policy makers should work closely with the chiropractic profession, in addressing the core issues of supply and demand of chiropractors by putting the welfare of the public as a primary concern. The Government of the HKSAR should take positive action to the reality testing approach we mentioned above in establishing a more realistic future chiropractic healthcare service policy. This will take us another step closer in attaining a truly integrated healthcare system for HKSAR.

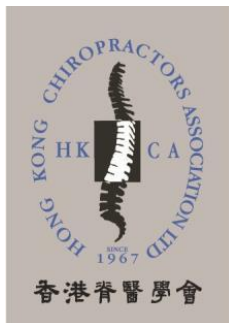
Yours truly,

Dr Henry H.K. Chan, D.C.

President

Hong Kong Chiropractors Association

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