



HONG KONG
DOCTORS UNION
香港西醫工會

LC Paper No. CB(2)1791/16-17(02)

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Our Ref.: HKDU/092/2017
3rd July 2017

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

By email

Dear Prof. Lee,

**Re: Strategic Review on Healthcare Manpower Planning
and Professional Development**

Hong Kong Doctors Union (HKDU) is the unique trade union with doctor members in both public and private services, registered with the Trade Union Registry to look after the interests and rights of doctors in their employer employee relationship. While we are committed to upgrade the standard of medical doctors to cater for the health of the Hong Kong community, we also relate to the Government the urgent needs of the patients and reflect the true situation in the context of medical care so that the Government will appropriately and efficiently set up policies with long term benefits for the health of Hong Kong citizens.

Hong Kong healthcare delivery system is characterized by its dual public and private healthcare sectors. The two sectors cover the various levels of care from primary to the more specialized secondary and tertiary care. This has achieved impressive health outcome of its population over years especially in terms of life longevity and infant mortality rate. In regard to the captioned Government document, we have the following concerns:-

Manpower problem in the public hospital setting

Hong Kong has one of the best healthcare systems in the world for years and the average spending of Healthcare system is around 5.7 per cent of the GDP in Hong Kong which is comparatively low when compared with other developed countries. The public healthcare sector faces a number of challenges, namely, shortage of medical practitioners, a growing elderly population, and rising healthcare costs, etc. These problems are not new and they have been in existence for a long long time and should be handled with practical care. **The shortage of manpower in the public healthcare sector are expected if we wish to maintain the dual public and private healthcare systems in Hong Kong.** However, our Council still wishes our Government to review the running of the Hospital Authority and to consider ways of building up a more friendly environment in the public hospital settings so that the public doctors would stay longer in public healthcare system in Hong Kong.

to be cont'd...P. 2



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P. 2

Concern about relaxing the licensing examination for foreign practitioners

There are voices in the society to suggest relaxing the licensing examination for foreign practitioners so as to increase the number of medical practitioners in the public healthcare system. However, relaxing the licensing examination for foreign practitioners might lower the quality of medical services and we could not see how it would benefit patients in Hong Kong. Furthermore, these foreign practitioners would not guarantee to work long in the public healthcare system in Hong Kong and would not be able to solve the manpower shortage in the public healthcare system.

CME for medical practitioners

Medical Practitioners have to manage many different patients each day after graduation from the medical schools. Medical Practitioners maintain their knowledge, skills, competence and performance through everyday practice, as well as they read, search and self-study extensively to solve clinical problems in their everyday practice. This is already good enough as witnessed by the highest standard of medical care offered by the medical practitioners in Hong Kong. Our Council supports the medical practitioners' participation in CME to enhance their professional standards in terms of knowledge and technology skills. Yet the CME should not be linked with their license to practice.

Reform on Medical Council of Hong Kong

The Medical Council of Hong Kong is formed to protect patients, develop ethical conduct and maintain high standards of medical services in Hong Kong. In the proposed reform of the Medical Council, the Professional Autonomy should be maintained by adding elected doctor members equal to that of lay members into the Council. HKDU does not object to increasing the number of lay members into the Council if the same number of elected doctor members is also increased. A survey among our members indicate that the majority of our members disagree on only adding 4 lay members to the Medical Council of Hong Kong and not for the same number of elected doctor members.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr. Yeung Chiu Fat Henry
President
Hong Kong Doctors Union



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