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**香港物理治療學會有限公司**

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Honourable Chair and Members  
Panel on Manpower

*The input from Hong Kong Physiotherapy Association (HKPA) to Panel on Manpower*

**RE: Situation of Work Rehabilitation in 2017**

HKPA would like to make the following comments and recommendations:

The current legislation on the employee compensation system mainly focuses on the part of compensation but it overlooks the importance of rehabilitation of the injured workers. HKPA concurs that the compensation for injured worker is crucial. However, with early identification and diagnosis, early intervention and proactive rehabilitation, HKPA believes that injured workers will benefit even more in terms of physical well-being, psychological status and quality of life.

The prolonged waiting time for specialty consultation (e.g. orthopaedic consultation) in the public hospitals usually goes beyond the golden recovery period (first 6 months after the injury) for most of the injured workers. The delay of appropriate intervention not only significantly hinders the recovery process, but also increases the risk of development of different physical, social and psychological complications, which ultimately leads to reduced likelihood of returning to work, increase in medical cost and social burden.

Work rehabilitation plays a vital role in the entire recovery process for the majority of injured workers. With the current triage system, injured workers can usually start physiotherapy 2 to 3 weeks after their injuries. With regards to the normal waiting time for physiotherapy (6 to 10 months) of other types of patients, injured workers have already enjoyed an earlier intervention. Owing to the shortage of manpower, physiotherapists in Hospital Authority have been overloaded with different types of patient cases. Work injured patients are generally more complicated cases with high

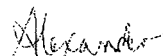
risk of the above-mentioned complications. With limited contact time and the principle of fairness to the other types of patients, physiotherapists hardly spend extra time to deal with these problems.

HKPA has no objection to the idea of establishing collaboration between the Labour Department and potential or existing service providers including Hospital Authority, private hospitals/clinics or non-government organizations in providing more timely and accessible rehabilitation to injured workers, provided that an independent governing organization is established to accredit and monitor all service providers on a regular basis. Establishing the recognized qualifications for "Case Managers" to oversee the coordination of the rehabilitation services is an important step towards the development of a smooth pathway from injury to successful return-to-work.

Return-to-work is a key factor for successful rehabilitation of injured workers. HKPA understands that the cooperation and liaison with employers is vital. With the consideration of the scale and nature of different Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Hong Kong, HKPA has concern on the feasibility of the arrangement of modified duties or job rotation in SMEs. Therefore, HKPA has reservation on the law enforcement for the compulsory arrangement of different modifications at work. Instead, HKPA supports the rewarding scheme for the employers if the above arrangements can be provided and delivered successfully. Such a rewarding scheme will have a positive and motivating effect on the return-to-work plan for injured workers and on the relationship between employers and the injured workers.

Since the management of work injury and rehabilitation is a complex issue and involves many different parties, a public hearing is highly recommended to collect more opinions from different parties. We would also like to have a deputation to further discuss this issue.

Yours sincerely,



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