



10th December 2018

To the Legislative Council of Hong Kong,

CC: **Chairman, Prof Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP**, Dr Hon Pierre Chan, Panel on Health Services, Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, People's Republic of China

CC: **Professor Sophia Chan, JP and Mr. Fong Ngai**, Secretary and Deputy Secretary for Food and Health, Food and Health Bureau, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 18/F, East Wing, Central Government Offices, 2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong

CC: **Professor Eng-kiong YEOH, GBS, OBE, JP**, Director, The Jockey Club School of Public Health and Primary Care, Faculty of Medicine, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Background to the City Mental Health Alliance Hong Kong

The City Mental Health Alliance Hong Kong (CMHA HK) is an Alliance of City businesses working to create a culture of good mental health for workers in the city of Hong Kong, increase mental health understanding and enable businesses to take practical steps. We are part of a global organisation and our Hong Kong members represent 13 businesses from the legal, financial and professional services. More information can be found on our website: <http://www.cmhahk.org/>.

Staff within our organisations often work in high pressured environments. In addition, given the transitional nature of many job roles, they may also be away from usual support mechanisms including family and friends. The provision of English-speaking clinical psychology services to our staff are of high importance to ensure the continued good health of our staff, ensure work productivity and to provide access to crisis support when required. We feel that it is important that our staff are able to access appropriate language and culturally competent clinical psychology services.

Proposed Scheme for Registration of Clinical Psychologists

In recent weeks the proposed registration scheme for clinical psychologists has come to our attention. We wrote a letter of concern (dated 30th October) and received a reply on 8th November from the Division of Clinical Psychology.

We applaud the steps taken by the Division of Clinical Psychology to protect the public and uphold professional standards of clinical psychologists. In addition, we welcome the suggestion that applicants from the UK, USA, Australia and Canada who have fulfilled the education, training and examinations requirements for registration/licensing to practice clinical psychology in the country where the qualification is conferred are normally considered as being able to meet the standard of registration in Hong Kong. We welcome these efforts and the proposed registration scheme to ensure credibility of the profession and maintain high standards of professional care for our employees.

However, we remain concerned that the current proposal has the potential to exclude many qualified overseas trained, licensed/registered clinical psychologists, which would result in further reduction of access to much needed mental health services.

We understand that psychologists holding the recognised international programmes would still be required to meet the education and competency standards of local accreditation set by Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists (HKICP). However, we are concerned that current suggested provision of remedial training programmes as part of current practice would not be sufficient for the training through-put of psychologists that might be required to undergo such remedial training and costs are considerable. We are concerned that this would result in a shortfall of clinical psychology service provision to the English-speaking population. We further understand that the HKICP would be instrumental in making the decision on individuals regarding registration on a 'case-by-case' basis.

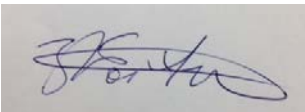
Recommendation

Therefore, we would like to propose recommendations to ensure that the registration scheme can fulfil its aims, remains inclusive, there is no shortfall of services for our staff and insurance providers are able to refer staff to appropriately.

We urge the Division of Clinical Psychology to allow psychologists from the International Psychologists Concern Group (IPCG) to allow overseas trained and non-Cantonese speaking psychologists, including those from the UK and the USA, to become part of the HKICP and to hold fair representation. This would ensure that applications from overseas qualified psychologists can be appropriately assessed. In addition, where remedial training is required, this can be accessed appropriately to ensure there is no shortfall in the provision of clinical psychology services as training is undertaken.

We are grateful for the opportunity to provide input to the proposed scheme. We welcome further reflection and would be pleased to provide further input and guidance from the perspective of businesses and employees on recommendations and roll-out of the scheme.

Yours Sincerely,



Zoe Fortune, PhD

CEO, City Mental Health Alliance – Hong Kong