



香 港 藥 學 服 務 基 金
HONG KONG PHARMACEUTICAL CARE FOUNDATION

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20th November 2019

Dr Chui Tak Yi,
Under Secretary For Food and Health
Food and Health Bureau

Dear Dr Chui,

The Hong Kong Cancer Strategy (Cancer Strategy)

I am writing on behalf of the Hong Kong Pharmaceutical Care Foundation (HKPCF) where I am the Director, to express our Foundation's view about the Cancer Strategy which the Hong Kong SAR Government has announced in July 2019 and where an Information Note (IN10/18-19) was being discussed at the Legislative Council at its meeting on 8 November 2019, all of which according to the HKSAR is to reduce the cancer burden of the local population and improving the quality of life and survivorship of cancer patients through setting work priorities and directions.

As a non-profit making and charitable organisation registered under IR 88 since 2007, I would like to introduce our organisation to you and show our interests to get involved in the Cancer Strategy planning. HKPCF was founded by a group of pharmacists who wish to provide pharmaceutical care related services to the community with our professional knowledge and expertise. In this connection, HKPCF has established the SafeMed Dispensary which is registered with the Pharmacy and Poisons Board as an Authorized Seller of Poisons since 2016. The main purpose of starting the operation of this Dispensary is in response to the market needs from patients seeking to purchase Self-Finance Items (SFI) from a reliable community source at a subsidized price. The dispensing activities in our SafeMed Dispensary are supervised by registered pharmacists who are dedicated to provide one-to-one drug counselling service to patients who come to our Dispensary with valid prescriptions calling for SFI which are issued mostly by doctors from Hospital Authority hospitals and some to a lesser extent by private sectors.

There is one special service worth mentioning that our SafeMed Dispensary is committed to provide is help patients gaining better access to expensive oncology drugs through different types of drug subsidy programs and to relieve some of the patients' burden in dealing with what the patients termed the "financial toxicity" and allow patients to start appropriate oncology drug treatment at an earlier stage. We collaborate with different pharmaceutical companies to offer different drug subsidy programs which aim to lessen the financial burden of patients especially those who seek medical treatment at private sector and those who are not covered by Samaritan Fund, Community Care Fund or Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme.



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These drug subsidy programs include various types of Drug Capping Program, Patient Assisted Program and even simply Financial Assistance Program all of which cover about 9 cancer treatment drugs and 20 odd other different drugs so far in our service scope. Some features of these drug subsidy programs are listed below for your information:

Drug Capping Program

This Program covers specific types of oncology drugs only. Patients who are in this Drug Capping Program can collect free drugs from SafeMed Dispensary until the end of their drug treatment upon presentation of valid prescriptions as well as proof that they have made the payment themselves in the past period of drug treatment cycle. Hence, this program can allow patients to have a better estimation of total drug cost required for their drug treatment as the cost would be capped.

Patient Assisted Program

Patients can get discounted oncology drugs from our SafeMed Dispensary through our drug assistance programs. Again, this Program covers specific types of oncology drugs only.

Financial Assistance Program

For those patients who are enrolled in Financial Assistance Programs, they can get partial reimbursement from our SafeMed Dispensary for their drug purchases made from the public hospitals with proof of their purchase records.

For all of the above programs and other SFI drug dispensing, our pharmacists provide one-to-one drug consultations to the patients throughout their drug treatment journey. Patients are required to visit our pharmacy regularly so that our pharmacists can provide drug side effects management information to patients, educate them on proper drug use with the goal of enhancing patient understanding of their medications and achieving effective and continuous drug treatment. We believe that supported by regular pharmacist intervention, drug counselling and medication reconciliation can greatly improve patients' drug compliance and fill in the gap for patients to understand and manage their complicated medication regimens.

As it was mentioned that an information sharing platform would be created in the future by the HKSAR Government under the Cancer Strategy to host these information and service offerings from different NGOs so that the concerned patients and that their families can search and look for these information from this platform. Hence, we would like to seek your support to engage our organisation in this platform as we are looking for more opportunities to allow more cancer patients in the community to be aware of the existence of our organisation and also about our services in order that they can benefit from our programs.



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In the meantime, we have been trying to contact the Cancer Patient Resources Centre in various Hospital Authority Hong Kong clusters to introduce our organisation and service. Perhaps, your liaison or referral to these cluster centres would enable us to make an early start.

If there are other ways that our organisation can help the HKSAR Government and the patients, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely,

Ms S C Chiang
Director,
HKPCF

cc : Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, SBS, JP
Chairman, Panel on Health Services,
LEGCO, HKSAR