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Hong Kong
 Public Doctors' Association
 香港公共醫療醫生協會

Unit C, 3/F, Worldwide Centre,
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8 July 2021

Clerk to Bills Committee on Medical Registration (Amendment) Bill 2021
 Legislative Council Secretariat
 Legislative Council Complex
 1 Legislative Council Road
 Central, Hong Kong

**Submission from Hong Kong Public Doctors' Association
 on Medical Registration (Amendment) Bill 2021**

The Hong Kong Public Doctors' Association ("HKPDA") objects to the Medical Registration (Amendment) Bill 2021.

The healthcare system in Hong Kong has been ranked high in terms of health status indicators such as life expectancy at birth and infant mortality rate. Unfortunately, due to short-sighted healthcare policies, uneven distribution of resources, imbalance between public and private healthcare sectors, and reduction in the number of medical students after SARS outbreak in 2003 under the economic downturn, the number of doctors working in the public healthcare sector is insufficient. The healthcare system has been overloaded with the rapidly expanding population, and the public has suffered from short medical consultation and long waiting time.

The HKPDA welcomes non-locally trained doctors with satisfactory medical knowledge and language proficiency who are devoted to serving Hong Kong society. Such prerequisites are currently fairly and strictly upheld by the Licensing Examination of the Medical Council of Hong Kong, so as to safeguard the healthcare system of the Special Administrative Region.

Under the proposed Medical Registration (Amendment) Bill 2021, the new "Special Registration" allows Hong Kong permanent residents with "recognized medical qualifications" registered in places outside Hong Kong to practice in the Hong Kong public healthcare system. Unfortunately, the criteria for "recognized medical qualifications" is vague if not objective at all (awarded by a body that is *broadly comparable* to any local university in terms of international rankings and curriculum). Moreover, the composition of the 10-people Special Registration Committee lacks the voice of frontline medical doctors, with three members being the Chief Executive of the Hospital Authority and the Deans of the Faculty of Medicine of the two local universities, and another five (including the Director of Health) appointed by the Chief Executive of the Special Administrative Region. Lastly, there is a lack of mechanism for regular review of the list of "recognized medical qualifications." Without objective and transparent standards, the proposed "Special Registration" cannot assess individual proficiency of non-locally trained doctors. Even though there is disciplinary oversight on all doctors by the Medical Council of Hong Kong, the concerns from the public are not properly addressed. The medical profession has the responsibility to uphold a high standard of healthcare for the Hong Kong people, and our objection to the current Medical Registration (Amendment) Bill 2021 is not mere protectionism.



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The annual number of local medical graduates has increased from 248 in 2011 to around 470 this year, and is estimated to further increase to 530 in 2025. We expect the Government to further increase healthcare resource and recurrent funding of the public health system, in order to ensure local graduates ample employment and specialty training opportunities, improve hardware of public health system (including the number of in-patient hospital beds and equipments), and increase the workforce of nursing, allied health and supportive staff. The governance of the Hospital Authority should be monitored so that resources can be allocated in accordance with the population structure and projection, so as to maintain a sustainable healthcare system for Hong Kong.

Hong Kong Public Doctors' Association