



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部醫務衛生局
Health Bureau, Government Secretariat
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

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31 January 2024

Mr Colin Chui
Clerk to Panel
Panel on Health Services
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Mr Chui,

**Enabling Radiographers and Medical Laboratory Technologists
to Accept Referrals from Chinese Medicine Practitioners
under Specified Circumstances**

With reference to your letter of 14 December 2023 referring the matters mentioned by Dr Hon David LAM Tzit-yuen in his letter of 13 December 2023 addressed to the Chairman of the Legislative Council Panel on Health Services, our reply in consultation with the Secretariat of the Chinese Medicine Council of Hong Kong (CMCHK) is set out below –

The Government briefed the Legislative Council Panel on Health Services on the latest progress of the legislative proposals concerning amendments to the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance (Cap. 359) on 8 December 2023, which include enabling radiographers and medical laboratory technologists to accept referrals from Chinese medicine practitioners (CMPs) under specified circumstances for providing diagnostic imaging and laboratory tests to patients. The proposed arrangements for and advance preparatory work of the legislative proposals have been set out in the LC Paper No.

CB(4)1053/2023(01).

The Government has all along supported various healthcare professions to handle their respective professional development issues under the principles of “professional autonomy” and safeguarding patients’ interests. It is hoped that after a consensual proposal is formed within the healthcare professions concerned, the relevant statutory councils/boards can then proceed to set out specific medical operational procedures and mechanisms through establishing codes/guidelines. Based on the above principle, regarding the proposal on the use of modern technologies and techniques by CMPs to assist in diagnoses and treatments in the course of practice, the Government considers that it should be left to the Chinese medicine (CM) profession to set the required standards of knowledge, skill, competence, conduct, etc., and to fully consult other healthcare professional stakeholders involved in the provision of relevant services to promote inter-disciplinary collaboration. In parallel, the CM profession should also ensure that CMPs receive adequate and appropriate professional training, and clearly understand the professional requirements (including follow-up to relevant diagnoses) as well as the associated professional and legal liabilities for the medical practice concerned to safeguard patients’ safety and interests.

As far as the CM profession is concerned, the CMCHK and its Chinese Medicine Practitioners Board (CMPB), as the statutory bodies responsible for matters relating to the implementation of regulatory measures for the practice of CM profession, perform the functions of, among other things, ensuring that CMPs have attained adequate standard of professional practice and conduct, and promoting professional education of CMPs. In this connection, the Secretary for Health has written to invite the CMCHK and its CMPB to set up a working group to explore and initiate professional discussions on such issues in accordance with the directions and principles laid down by the Government.

We believe the working group will take various issues into full consideration, including the content and mechanism of training, the professional knowledge and skill requirements, the professional requirements and associated professional liabilities, as well as the necessary guidelines and codes (including amendments to the Code of Professional Conduct for Registered CMPs in Hong Kong) for CMPs to make such referrals. The CMCHK, the Supplementary Medical Professions Council (SMPC) and its relevant Boards will then proceed to

complete the preparatory work, including amendments to the Codes of Practice of relevant professions. The working group should also fully consult relevant stakeholders including the SMPC and its relevant Boards, the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine and its Academy Colleges, professional bodies such as the Hong Kong Registered Chinese Medicine Practitioners Association, the Schools of CM of the three local universities, as well as representatives of the operator of the Chinese Medicine Hospital (CMH) of Hong Kong (i.e. the HKBU Chinese Medicine Hospital Company Limited).

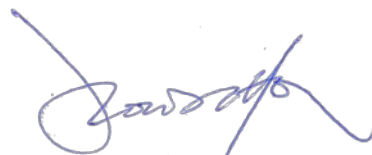
The Secretariat of the CMCHK stated that the preparatory work of the working group has commenced. The priority task is to conduct a study on the professional standards required for registered CMPs to refer patients for diagnostic imaging and laboratory tests, with a view to formulating relevant reference standards and guidelines, as well as advising on the amendments to the Code of Professional Conduct for Registered CMPs in Hong Kong to clarify the professional requirements and associated responsibilities of registered CMPs in handling referrals of patients for diagnostic imaging and laboratory tests. The working group will then review the content of relevant training provided by the Schools of CM of the three local universities and the questions for the CMP Licensing Examination, so as to ensure that both locally and non-locally trained CMPs possess the professional standards required for making such referrals. The working group will also formulate the requirements and mechanism for continuing education to make certain that registered CMPs who refer patients for diagnostic imaging and laboratory tests meet the required professional standards. At this stage, members of the working group include the Chairman of the CMPB and the chairmen of its relevant committees, representatives of the Schools of CM of local universities, as well as lay persons. The Secretariat will pass the letter of Dr Hon David LAM Tzit-yuen to the working group for consideration.

As for the plan to take forward the proposal in two phases, it primarily takes into account the uniqueness of the modes of service and medical settings of the CMH, including the CM-led in-patient services to be provided by the CMH, the more complicated types of diseases and cases expected to be handled by the CMH than the out-patient clinics in general, and the greater need for the CMH to use modern technologies and techniques to assist in diagnoses and treatments. Moreover, the CMH will involve itself in inter-disciplinary collaboration, and offer services of integrated Chinese-Western medicine consultation and 24-hour on-site

consultation, as well as one-stop medical services including CM, integrated rehabilitation, diagnostic radiology and laboratory testing. Thus, the functions, powers, responsibilities and corresponding training needs of the CMPs in the CMH are entirely different from those who mainly work independently in out-patient clinics. The CMH will set up its governance structure, formulate clinical guidelines and mechanisms, as well as training requirements and a service quality assurance system to meet operational needs and ensure patients' safety. On this basis, the first CMH in Hong Kong is well-equipped to implement the proposal in terms of governance and supporting facilities.

The Government will closely monitor the progress of the professional discussions between the CMCHK and its CMPB and make appropriate arrangements in respect of the legislative amendments and specific implementation timetable.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dominic Ho', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

(Dominic Ho)
for Secretary for Health

c.c. Secretary of the Chinese Medicine Council of Hong Kong