



Hong Kong College of Health Service Executives

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13 June 2008

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Dear Sir,

Response to the Consultation Document –Your Health Your Life

Attached is the response to the captioned paper from the Hong Kong College of Health Service Executives. The College is a professional organization with fellowship and membership who are executives from various health care organizations.

Our college is committed and prepared to the development of professionalism in health services and will actively participate in your coming second stage of consultation. You may also publish our views in your report.

Please feel free to contact us for further information.

Yours faithfully

(Dr MA Hok Cheung)
President

Hong Kong College of Health Service Executives

Encl

Response to the Consultation Document –Your Health Your Life: Health Care Reform Consultation Document

I. Introduction

The Hong Kong College of Health Service Executives (www.hkchse.org) is a professional association with fellowship and membership who are executives from various health care related organizations in both the public and private sectors. The council members have discussed about the documents and we held a forum for our members to discuss the topic with eminent professors to lead and discuss the topics. During your first stage of consultation, you would like to seek opinions on the two aspects. We try to summarize our opinions on two major issues which are:

- i) the key principles and concepts of the service reform proposals,
- ii) the pros and cons of possible supplementary financing options.

II. The principles and concepts of the service reform proposals

Our Views

- We support there is an urgent need for the reform especially after the previous consultation documents in health services and financing reforms during the past ten years. It is the time for action now.
- We acknowledge the current increasing demand for public health services which has put our public hospital services at risk. Certain areas of specialties with long waiting times need immediate attention to provide good services while maintaining good staff morale.
- There are alternative choices for the public to public hospitals. However, the current scenario is for those who can afford private services. There should be mechanisms to address the issues and the idea of collaborations between public and private sectors (PPP) should be highly encouraged.
- The current emphasis on holistic primary care is insufficient and we hope to see health targets set by the government such as the 'Health of the Nations' in the UK. The emphasis of public health in promoting healthy lifestyle, health promotion, and primary care should be fully implemented at all levels of the society.

- The issues about continuity and integration of care need more attention from the government to act as leading role as different professions still have their professional interests which may hinder some of the developments.
- The concepts of multi-partite medical centres of excellence should be encouraged and it can help Hong Kong to develop centre of excellences to attract medical tourism to bring more revenue, income, expertise to the health services in Hong Kong.
- The implementation and supervision of private doctors to practice in public hospitals can have pitfalls about their accountability. We support the idea only with a clear system of check and balance.
- The Hospital Authority currently has a better integrated electronic health record system which should be further developed and lead the way to integrate the Hong Kong society into 'e-health integrated society' in both the public and private health services.
- The idea of a 'personal limit on medical expenses' about public healthcare safety net needs very careful considerations as it will affect patients life and attract media attention easily.

III. The Supplement Financing Options

Our Views

- The college has a feeling that the six supplement financing options are promoted as either choosing one of them. Of course, there are opportunities for the Bureau to consider a 'Hybrid' format which can best suit the situation of Hong Kong.
- Hong Kong should develop a unique supplement financing option with a new name such as Medi-Assist, etc. to distinguish between other countries.
- For the 'Social health insurance' option, there are limited room for this option to fund healthcare through a rather big percentage of the income of individuals as now they are paying their MPF and taxation.
- For 'Out-of-pocket payments' option, there are areas that can increase user fees for public healthcare services. Inflation and other economical situations should be considered before the increase of fees. However, the considerations of

horizontal and vertical equity should be addressed if different fee structures are implemented to different groups of patients. It should be fully explained to the public why certain groups have to pay more.

- For 'Medical saving accounts' option, this can be piloted to model the running of the option. However, we do not know who should be the specified group (at what income level) to join this option. Enrolments should allow choice to invest in their savings with opportunity to include their health insurance if they take out from the private health insurance. To go further if possible, a certain amount of the MPF savings can be transferred to their medical saving accounts.
- For 'Voluntary private health insurance', Hong Kong has currently covered a part of workforce in the private sectors paid by their companies or individuals. With the concepts of pooling their risks, private health insurance should be encouraged to have more participants in order to lower the individual premium from a bigger pool of premiums.
- For 'Mandatory private health insurance', the college has doubts about the implementation of this option because of possible resistance from citizens. We see the difficulties in promoting this in Hong Kong.
- For 'Personal healthcare reserve', it is rather complicated about the logistics behind. The current option in the document does not have a simple and clear picture for the public to understand.

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