

1 Meeting with Dr. Lee Kok Long (Legislative Council Member, Functional Constituency – Health Services)

1.1 Introduction (Audiology Services in HK / Introduction of HKSA / CPD)

1.1.1 Audiology Services in HK

- most of the audiologists in Hong Kong work in private centers. It is estimated that 70% of the audiologists are working in private centers. There are few vacancies in the public sector in recent years.

1.1.2 Introduction of HKSA Ltd

1.1.3 CPD program

1.2 Registration of audiologists (Pros and Cons / Procedure)

Mr. Kam explained that audiological services in HK is now not being regulated. With the aging population in HK, the demand for audiological services is rising constantly. On the other hand, audiological service in public health sector is not expanding in proportion to population growth.

Mr. Eric Leung further clarified that such trend in Hong Kong may also be related to the increase of number of private centers. It is understood that legislation requires a long process and it requires more discussion within the professional field. However, the lack of statutory registration has already caused risks and problems as audiological malpractice, though not life-threatening, may still result in long-term adverse effects on patients. Since private practice is common in the field, it is possible that non-professionals may provide audiological services to public.

Dr. Lee expressed that it is worthwhile to proceed with registration. The concern is whether audiologists have enough resources to do it. The model of "Chiropractors Registration Ordinance" involves huge amount of resources and may not be feasible for any other professions. Resources would be required in services like legal advice and actions in the process.

Dr. Lee said that he proposed a health professional council and audiologist may also be included. However, the establishment of such council may take a very long time. On other hand, Supplementary Medical Professions Council is established (for PTs, OTs, optometrists, RTs and radiographers) and such model of registration can be considered by the audiology profession. Several interested allied health professional bodies may join effort to establish a comparable statutory council.

Dr. Lee also stated that he may try pushing the government to acknowledge lists of practicing allied health professionals in different recognized allied health societies so that the status of practicing professionals is publicly recognized (e.g. prosthetist-orthotists have completed such a list). In the long run, a legislation procedure is required but it would take a very long time. At the moment, Dr. Lee suggested that he may organize a platform to facilitate various allied health disciplines with the wish to pursue registration to share among each others.

Dr. Lee stated that the establishment of CPD may help in pursuing registration (due to professional development and image of the society). At the meantime, HKSA may investigate about the SMC to understand the requirements set by the government. As an interim measure, HKSA may provide a list of practitioners for public recognition. Dr. Lee said he will try to help allied health disciplines like audiology to gain public recognition of the need of legal status.

1.3 Voting right of private audiologists in Legco Election

Dr. Lee explained that the government is avoiding to acknowledge the status of to many professional societies by granting voting rights to private practitioners of health related services. Private doctors have voting rights because they have statutory recognition.

1.4 Other Health-care related issues of audiologists

Health voucher is not applicable to audiological services for unknown reason. It is suspected that the government had overlooked the need of audiological services of senior citizens. He will look into this issue.

1.5 Others

Dr. Lee agreed to 1) raise questions in Legco about health voucher; 2) coordinate meetings to discuss on registration and listing.