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Subject Healthcare reform opinion from Tuen Mun Hospital

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Dear Dr York Chow,

Thanks for your visit to Tuen Mun Hospital on 6/6/2008 to collect our views on the Healthcare Reform Consultation Document. I would also thank for your stamina to actually put forward the reform options to the Society.

Besides option number two (out-of-pocket), I do not have any strong preference to the rest of the 5 options. However I wish to express my views from an consumer's or voter's point of view. Where are the lures? What are the incentives? Is there a triple-win situation?

1. In order to make middle-class people / commercial sector agree to pay more for medical expenses, either in form of social health insurance, medical insurance (compulsory or voluntary) or medical saving, there must be enough incentive – generous tax exemption/rebate, more choices and better services.
2. Price for the incentive – full payment when the insured visit Government-subsidized medical service, either out-of-pocket or from insurance/saving.
3. Incentive for lower social class to support reform – shorter queue and better funding of existing subsidized medical service due to diversion of people to private market through insurance or healthcare saving and extra funding with full payment of service by insured people.
4. Reform private medical market through increase competition – privatization of the 2 Medical Schools and University Hospitals. HA in turn bought the quaternary service from the Universities for the uninsured poor.
5. Further policy (eg reformation of medical council) to help Hong Kong to revitalize the medical sector to further establish herself as a regional medical centre like Singapore. This should be an ultimate solution for revenue generation.

I tend to believe that escalating medical cost for new treatments and medico-legal expenses are more worrying than aging population in jeopardizing the long-term sustainability and development of healthcare system in Hong Kong. I have observed that many elderly have moved to China after their retirement. I hope the Bureau can provide more research into these areas in the second stage of consultation.

Thanks

Best regards,

Dr Alexander Kai-Yiu Choi

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