



jj chen

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Please respond to

To beStrong@fhb.gov.hk

cc

bcc

Subject Medical Reform Proposal 2008

Urgent

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Dear Dr. Chow,

I am a retired teacher who shares the views of the common people in the street. So the Medical Reform Proposal 2008 has compelled me to write to you for the present existing medical system is the best in Asia and it has served the Hong Kong people well. It has the extra advantage that people who have money can go to private hospitals and private doctors to get quick and private, individual care. That is why the insurance scheme should not be introduced at all into the Hong Kong Medical system.

Beacuse of space and shortage of time, I would limit my views to three points in this Email

First, I think the Medical Reform Proposal 2008 should be rejected outright just like the Harvard Report for it does not help the patients or the man in the street at all except the electronic information about the patients that would be shared by all doctors in the public and private hospitals. In fact the RTHK broadcast in April 2008 has pointed out that the public benefits from this electronic information only and this electronic information should not be a part of the medical proposal. Sad to say, the public loses out in everything. But the important point is brought out by RTHK program when it concludes the report by stating that only the Insurance companies will gain the greatest benefit from the Medical Reform Proposal for it has totally ignored the patients' interests and welfare.

Second, look at what the medical insurance companies in the United States have done to the health system for the American people. It is rightly pointed out by Michael Moore in his recent documentary " Sicko " that because of the greedy medical insurance companies, the Medical System in the United States has the worst medical care in the world among the advanced countries and he compared the medical systems of Canada, France, the UK and Cuba, supposedly a poor country with that of America. The result is that all the people in these advanced countries get free medical care and no medical insurance is required at all. But the medical insurance companies in America get richer and richer at the expense of the ordinary people and pateints and the American people suffer. At the end of the film Michael Moore summed up his views by saying the US medical system is a disgrace to America and the insurance companies are to be solely blamed for this sad and sorry state of the patients and the health system.

By the way, the recent HK Government advertisement showing rich doctors and senior government officials playing football is sexist, pompous and downright insulting to the intelligence of the common man in the street. It would be a good idea to do a surrvey to see whether the ordinary people got the message at all.

Lastly, nearer home, some people would point out that people in Singapore have to buy medical insurance but one needs to look at the composition of the legislators in both the governments. The legislators in the Singapore Government are mostly politicians who would fight for the rights and interests of the ordinary people. The basic difference between the two governments is that the Singapore government is well known for trying to combine the benefits of a paternal, autocratic and democratic government but the Hong Kong Government is very different with businessmen dominating the Legco and these businessmen inevitably look after their own interests and profits. The abolition of the Estate Tax is an example of what businessmen can do in the Legco.

Even my aunt who is a Singaporean is very critical of the compulsory medical insurance in Singapore and in fact she lives in Canada to enjoy the free medical care which she would have to pay in Singapore. Also she pointed out that no amount of medical insurance would cover all the expenses when one is sick and in great need of medical care for sure enough the medical insurance companies would always find a way to reject clients' claims for payment totally. Consequently people not only suffer in pain but also lose everything and even their own lives.

Also my relatives in Australia envy the free medical care in Canada and even Mainlanders whom I met in international conferences would prefer to stay in Canada and not Australia if they can have a choice to live where they like. Moreover my friends who have Australian passports enjoy the medical care here in Hong Kong and complain about the expensive medical insurance in Australia.

I think the Estate Tax can be reinstated to provide revenue to the HK Government so that the present Medical system can be maintained. One must also note here that people so far have accepted the hospital charges gradually introduced over the last fifteen years which have already become a burden in these hard economic times.

Another way to increase revenue would be to introduce progressive taxation as found in advanced countries and not Sales Tax which would tax the poor people and not affect the rich at all. I am sure there are financial experts out there who can think of better ways to increase revenue so as to maintain the existing medical system in Hong Kong.

To conclude, I strongly agree to the views expressed in the RTHK program Pearl Report on the Medical reform in April 2008 that the Medical reform proposal has no benefit at all for the people of Hong Kong except the the medical insurance companies who will make profits and laugh all the way to the bank.

The present Mandatory Provident Fund with all its attendant hiccups has already become an unbearable burden for the Hong Kong people to bear so introducing the insurance element in the medical system in Hong Kong would just wreck lives and make the people of Hong Kong suffer intolerable pain without any hope of recovery at all.

Indeed the present medical system is a rich legacy of the British colonial government and even the late TV star Fei Fei made full use of it so it should be treasured forever. In this way Hong Kong would lead the way in providing the best and free medical care not just in Asia but in the world as well. Hong Kong would then hold a trump card over Singapore to have medical care without insurance at all and may be set a model for other countries to follow. Hong Kong has such large reserves

Thank you for your time and patience in reading this Email which expresses my strong views on the Medical Reform proposal and I hope you will consider them seriously and maintain the existing system with no insurance at all.

Yours sincerely,

Chen Jow Jin