

6 June 2008

Secretary for Food and Health  
19/F Murray Building  
Garden Road, Central, Hong Kong

Dear Dr. Chow,

**RE: Healthcare Reform Consultation**

1. I am writing to express my views on the options as listed out in "*Healthcare Reform Consultation Document*" that was published in March 2008.

2. First of all, please note that the user-pay principle was introduced and has been adopting by the Government in Hong Kong for many years on various areas including sewage charge, landfill charge, toll fee and assorted licence fees. Certain types of charges in public hospitals are currently based on user-pay principle.

3. As a matter of fairness, one should bear his/her own medical expenses in the user-pay principle which the Government has been recommending and adopting for many years. The Government should consistently stay on this user-pay principle, otherwise the public would consider the Government does not have a unified policy nor tries to take advantages from the taxpayers.

4. Moreover Hong Kong receives worldwide recognition as a place of free economy. Most of the options stated in "*Healthcare Reform Consultation Document*" are actually violating the principle of free economy, that requesting the people in Hong Kong to pay health insurance or healthcare reserve regardless pool-base or personal-base savings or insurance accounts. These options are not only controlling the taxpayers to plan and select their preferences based on their needs, indeed the introduction of health insurance or healthcare reserve would create unnecessary damages to the business of insurance companies in Hong Kong which most of them in terms of sizes of operations and insurance premium are foreign invested companies.

5. Referring to "*Healthcare Reform Consultation Document*", the proposed options namely "Government funding (existing model)" and "Social health insurance" are requesting the high-income group to subsidize the low-income group, while "Mandatory private health insurance" and "Personal healthcare reserve" are also requesting the high-income group to subsidize the low-income group to maintain risk-sharing although both groups pay the same. These four options are not complying the well-adopted user-pay principle as mentioned in paragraphs 2 and 3.

6. The proposed options namely "Medical savings accounts", "Mandatory private health insurance" and "Personal healthcare reserve" are requesting all people in Hong Kong to save funds or contribute insurance premium for their healthcare. These options are not only affecting the personal interest of each individual, they also violate the principle of free economy as mentioned in paragraph 4, and may even infringe the basics of human rights in terms of personal choice.

7. In view of the principle of free economy and the present availability of various insurance plans in Hong Kong, the option of introducing "Voluntary private health insurance" is unnecessary and pointless. Person in Hong Kong can now subscribe a healthcare plan without interference from the Government.

8. Back to basic, to maintain the aforesaid principles and the fairness to the taxpayers in Hong Kong, the Government should focus on the user-pay principle – the option of "Out-of-pocket payments" as stated in "*Healthcare Reform Consultation Document*". No one except the Government (or Hospital Authority on day-to-day operations) can set a fair policy on the provision and charges of healthcare services. **The option "Out-of-pocket payments" is preferred and accepted.**

9. Thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely,



Conrad Sun MSc Dublin MCIM

