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POLICE FORCE COUNCIL
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HONG KONG

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來件編號 YOUR REF:

12th June 2008

Dr York CHOW
Secretary for Food and Health,
Food and Health Bureau
19/F, Murray Building,
Garden Road,
Central
Hong Kong.

Dear Dr CHOW,

Healthcare Reform Consultation

The Chairman of the Standing Committee on Medical and Dental Facilities (SCMDF) has encouraged Staff Councils to provide their views in this consultation exercise.

The Police Force Council Staff Side represents 27,000 serving men and women of the Hong Kong Police Force and their families. Our views in this consultation exercise are from the perspective of us being both citizens of Hong Kong, who have access to the public healthcare system and also being government employees eligible for best available free medical care under Civil Service Regulation 900.

The Police Staff Side is frustrated with the current state of healthcare provided to police employees. Police officers are often victims of violence upon them and those with occupational injuries consistently find that, relative to the risks in their job, there is insufficient protection through adequate medical care. The Department of Health and Hospital Authority are contracted by our employer to be the service provider for our employee

HONG KONG

SUPERINTENDENTS'
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POLICE INSPECTORS'
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ASSOCIATION
海外督察協會

JUNIOR POLICE OFFICERS'
ASSOCIATION
警察員佐級協會

healthcare. Against the background of major challenges to the public healthcare system in Hong Kong, it is apparent there is a deterioration in care provided to police employees.

We feel there is a lack of any real progress being made in the Standing Committee on Medical and Dental Facilities (SCMDF) meetings with Staff Councils to address our concerns on the deterioration in services. We consider it is necessary for the HKSARG to live up to its 'good employer' status and now take a fresh look at its approach for the healthcare of its employees. This critical look at healthcare requires a reexamination of the role both the Department of Health and Hospital Authority in the provision of certain services to government employees. We expect our employer to provide effective medical services to police officers and assure this at all times through 'best care' service providers in Hong Kong as promised under Civil Service Regulation 900.

The Police Force Council Staff Side is seeking a clearer determination of medical services to HKSARG employees. This requires either improvements within the current DH and HA provision to police employees or alternatives so as to provide better treatment and follow-up for our officers injured on duty and access by our officers and families to more efficient outpatient care. We support the development of Public-Private partnership in Healthcare and consider this is a viable option for employers such as HKSARG to provide primary, preventive and low-priority / elective procedures through the private sector to their employees and thereby relieve the burden on public healthcare.

In examining the six schemes for the financing of healthcare and the existing model of government funding, as outlined in the Healthcare Reform Consultation Document, the Police Force Council Staff Side has the following comments;

- We note the current overburdened public healthcare system and the assessments that the budgeted cost of healthcare is expected to rise from 38 billion to 78 billion by 2015. We consider that some 10 to 15 % of the public healthcare service of 38 billion is now being directed to provide employee health care to police officers and other civil servants and their dependents. We would support greater transparency in the financing to separate the costs for public healthcare from HKSARG employee healthcare.

- As citizens of Hong Kong we support improving healthcare in the community but do not support a major change from the the existing model of government funding. The healthcare system needs new sources of funding and we consider that employers should have the sole responsibility for any % of income contributions. Employers who can show their provision of comprehensive healthcare insurance to individual employees and their dependents be exempted from such contributions. Any Social health insurance, Tax-like model , should require contributions from employers.
- We do not support any scheme that would seek contibutions from employees or raise income tax levels.
- HKSARG employees and retirees are entitled to free medical care from their employer under CSR 900 and as such should be exempted from any proposals for contributions under the Tax-like model or for increased payments for user fees, out of pocket payments, under the User Pays model.
- We support a culture shift to encourage the community towards health insurance. In particular we feel the responsibility is with the employer to provide adequate healthcare support to employees. We do not think a voluntary health insurance model will meet with sufficient success within the community. We support employers **NOT employees** being required to set up either medical savings accounts, mandatory private health insurance or personal healthcare reserves for employees.
- It is our concern that any scheme collecting **employer** contribution as a % of employee income should minimise the cost of administration. Such schemes should ensure the highest possible percentage of any payments can be realised in the direct provision of healthcare.
- We support exemption from mandatory healthcare contributions by employers where there is provision of acceptable comprehensive medical insurance plans agreed between employers and individual employees.

Finally , we would ask for your personal attention to the deliberations in the the Standing Committee on Medical and Dental Facilities (SCMDF) meetings with Staff Councils to ensure DH and HA represnetatives respond more effectively to address our concerns on the deterioration in services. We would be happy to meet with yourself to further discuss these issues.

Yours faithfully,



WONG Chi-hung
Chairman
SPA



Liu Kit-ming
Chairman
HKPIA



David Williams
Chairman
OIA



Chung Kam-wa
Chairman
JPOA

c.c.

Commissioner of Police
L/M (54) in SS/M 1/1

External

Secretary for the Civil Service
Chairman, SCDS
Chairman, Police Sub-committee SCDS
Chairman, LEGCO Panel on Public Service
Secretary General, JSSCS