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**香港護理專科學院**

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By email: [policyaddress@pico.gov.hk](mailto:policyaddress@pico.gov.hk)

August 5, 2019

Mr. CHEUNG Kin-chung Matthew  
Chief Secretary for Administration  
The Hong Kong Government, SAR

Dear Mr. Cheung,

**RE: Proposal to the CE Policy 2019-2020 Consultation**

On behalf of The Hong Kong Academy of Nursing (HKAN), I would like to make the following suggestions for your consideration in formulating the CE Policy Address 2019-2020. The HKAN has 14 Academy Colleges with over 2700 Fellows from the public and private healthcare settings. All of the HKAN Fellows are experts and leaders in the delivery and development of quality services in the specialty areas they represent. We propose:

**1. Cultivation and retention of nursing expertise to support government initiatives in healthcare services**

Hong Kong has a pool of nursing talents with standards on par with international standards that can support the realization of government policy if fully utilized. The HKAN fully supports the government healthcare initiatives, such as e-cigarette ban, cancer strategy, non-communicable disease management, genomic medicine. We urge the government to support the cultivation and retention of these expert talents to provide the best quality of services for the Hong Kong people.

We are particularly concerned that there is a lack of infrastructure and system support to attract and retain the nurses with advanced competence to practice in the primary healthcare settings. The promotion of primary healthcare and the setting up of District Health Centres (DHC) are strongly supported by HKAN. We urge the government to look into building a strong nursing team practicing in the community. Scientific evidence has supported that patients equipped with better health literacy and self-management skills can reduce the unnecessary use of hospital services. The roles and scope of the nurse in primary care settings can fulfill the following functions: (i) Conduct comprehensive health assessment to clients through life span, (ii) Provide health care consultation to clients before and after doctor consultation sessions, (iii) Advise the clients on their disease concept and management, (iv) Enhance drug compliance, (v) Promote health education and protection, (vi) Promote mental health through counseling and psychosocial support, (vii) Facilitate building up of peer relationship among the chronic disease groups to enhance chronic disease management and compliance to treatment regime, (viii) Provide chronic disease management, risk assessment and stratification, nursing intervention and make appropriate referral to district network doctors and allied health services under agreed service protocol, (ix) Optimise the use of health communication



strategies including use of technology to enhance client self-management, and (x) Participate and lead public health research to identify gaps and service improvement. All of the above roles need to be fulfilled with direct care delivery and leadership of nurses with advanced competence in the specialty of community and public health nursing. There is a reward system, though can be improved for advanced practice nurses in the hospital setting, but not in the community.

## **2. HKAN acts as a certifying body to expedite the regulation of advanced practicing nurses**

Pursuant to the CE Policy Address 2018, the FHB has instructed the Nursing Council to set up a Subgroup to work on the setting up of core competencies, standards and regulatory mechanism for advanced nursing practice. The Subgroup has submitted an interim report to the government in late July 2019. The HKAN urges the government to consider delegating the task of certifying advanced practice nurses to HKAN. The Nursing Council will maintain its status as a regulator and the HKAN can be the certifying body. This model resembles the current relationship between The Medical Council of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine which is very effective in governing the practice of specialists. The appointment of HKAN as a certifying agent will reduce the administrative work of the Nursing Council and expedite the process in accomplishing the task. The Nursing Council does not have the professional expertise to accredit the training bodies nor certify individuals. It would need to rely on invited voluntary efforts of the professionals which will impede the process since there are now already 16 proposed specialties and may increase in the future. The process for arranging time for multiple groups to meet, let alone the actual time delegated to the work, is a challenge.

The HKAN is in a good position with full support from thousands of advanced practice nurses to implement and accredit the advanced practice nursing education and practices. Since 2012, HKAN and the 14 academy colleges have developed structured programs and specialist certification to certify advanced practice nurses so as to safeguard the standards of practice and protect the public. As in July 2019, the HKAN has 2,604 valid Fellowship Members and 30 Ordinary Members from Hospital Authority, private hospitals & community healthcare services in Hong Kong. The HKAN is the only professional body in Hong Kong that has done the ground work in setting standards and building mechanisms for advanced nursing practice with the involvement of nurse leaders and clinical experts in both the public and private sectors. The HKAN works closely and collaboratively with the 3 UGC funded universities with master programs in nursing, Hospital Authority and private hospitals to facilitate education and clinical training. Over the years of work, the HKAN has built a system with quality governance and assurance.

## **3. Enhancing nursing morale**

It is strongly urged that the supply of nurses not only focus on sheer headcount of numbers, but should also look into differentiated level of practice with the required education and experience to ensure quality services. It is well demonstrated in UK, USA, Singapore and Australia that advanced practice



nurses are competent to assess patients, deliver independent nursing intervention, and monitor the patients' compliance to treatment regime. In order to recognise and contain these expert talents, we ask the government to allocate resources to provide incremental points to HKAN Fellows. These Fellows have gone through vigorous assessments with proven advanced practice levels and significant contributions to the services.

To maintain the work morale and provide recognition to nurses, we also urge the government set aside budget to provide allowances for nurses who work in harsh conditions, such as working in high risk areas, under extremely hot weather outside hospital / offices and the like. Nurses' contributions in hospital projects, research and/or volunteer service should be recognized in terms of incentives such as continued education opportunities.

#### **4. Retention of nurses**

There is shortfall of nurses in terms of quantity, particularly with service development of both public and private sectors, NGO, and community based services. Besides preparing more nurse graduates, the retention of nurses in existing service is utmost important. Many local and international studies have revealed that besides monetary reward to reflect the level of work, the opportunity for career development is an equally important factor to deter intention-to-leave. There should be clear career pathway and development for the practicing nurses. We urge the government to put resources to support the nurses to engage in short continued education courses, as well as structured post-graduate education programs, particularly those clinical master programs offered by the UGC-funded universities in Hong Kong.

We look forward to your positive considerations of our recommendations. The HKAN will continue to support government policies and measures that'll bring benefits to the people of Hong Kong. Thank you!

Yours sincerely,

Frances Kam Yuet WONG  
RN PhD FAAN FHKAN (Education & Research)  
President, The Hong Kong Academy of Nursing

c.c.: Mrs. Carrie LAM, Chief Executive, The Hong Kong Government SAR  
Prof. Sophia CHAN, Secretary, Food & Health Bureau