



# The Hong Kong Academy of Nursing

## 香港護理專科學院

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The Chief Executive  
Hong Kong Government SAR

### RE: 2018 Policy Address

The Hong Kong Academy of Nursing would like to convey our heartfelt thanks to the Chief Executive for offering additional funding of HK\$ five billion to Hospital Authority to relieve the Winter Surge crisis. We urge the government to increase the regular financial input to support both health care services and pre-registration and continued education for healthcare professionals to sustain quality services in Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong Academy of Nursing (HKAN) would like to submit the following proposal to the Chief Executive for her consideration in the formulation of 2018 Policy Address.

We urge in summary, the government to:

1. Optimize the use of nurses in community-based health, nurse clinics and district health centres.
2. Support and accelerate the regulation of Advanced Nursing Practice for a better quality nursing workforce. The Hong Kong Academy of Nursing has the capacity to set standards and certify nurses in specialty areas of practice with regulatory support from the government.
3. Support continued professional education, both mentoring the younger nurses to contain talents and set up a system for mandatory professional education.

#### 1. District Health Centres

The setting up of District Health Centres (DHC) is strongly supported by HKAN. Nurses working in DHC serve to lead the development and coordinate the services, ultimately leading to cost effective services that meet the needs of the community at large. HKAN supported to appoint nurses at advanced practicing level with expertise to improve the quality of health care and facilitate the patients with chronic diseases to transit from acute setting and stay well 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 charge of the DHC can fulfill the following functions:

- Conduct comprehensive health assessment and education to clients through life span
- Provide health care consultation to clients before and after doctor consultation sessions

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- Advise the clients on their disease concept and management
  - Enhance drug compliance
  - Promote health education and protection
  - Promote mental health through counseling and psychosocial support
  - Facilitate building up of peer relationship among the chronic disease groups to enhance chronic disease management and compliance to treatment regime
- Provide chronic disease management, risk assessment and stratification, nursing intervention and make appropriate referral to district network doctor(s) and allied health services under agreed service protocol
  - Participate and lead public health research to identify gaps and service improvement

## 2. Advanced Nursing Practice

The scope of nursing is evolving over time, and the development of advanced nursing practice (ANP) is in alignment with the global trend. The qualification and competence for the initial entry to practice in nursing is not adequate to deal with contemporary health care demands. The contribution of nurses is not only in their sheer volume and numbers, but in their quality, in the sense that they provide expert care at an advanced level. The optimal use of nursing talent is for the benefit and well-being of the people they serve. Systematic reviews of nurses in ANP roles consistently show that their outcomes are equivalent to and sometimes exceed those of other members of the health care team, particularly in the aspects of health enhancement and chronic disease management. Patients consistently report high levels of satisfaction with the care provided by advanced practice nurses.

HKAN is in a good position to implement and accredit the advanced practice nursing education and practices. Majority specialty nurse experts are already taking leading role in HKAN and the 14 academy colleges. 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 to protect the public.

There is a genuine demand for advanced nursing services to fill service gaps and cope with aging population. We strongly suggest government to grant statutory status to HKAN so that HKAN can carry on the well-developed specialty education and start licensure of Advanced Practice Nurses as soon as possible. The ultimate goal is to build quality workforce and enhance health of the Hong Kong Citizens.

## 3. Manpower

There is shortfall in terms of quantity, particularly with the increase in complexity of patient care, service development of both public and private sectors, NGO, and community based services, winter and summer surge of public hospitals, attrition, retirement, new projects such as the opening of the Hong Kong Children's Hospital, hospital redevelopment, district health centres, enhancement initiatives for elderly and rehabilitation services of the welfare sectors and many more. It is strongly urged that the supply of nurses not only focus on sheer headcount of numbers, but should also look into the differential level of practice with the required education and experience to ensure quality services. The aging population, use of high-end technologies and complexity of patient care are calling for great demands of advanced practice nurses who are

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well equipped with demonstrated competence in various specialty areas such as chronic disease management, nurse clinics and nurse consultants. It is well demonstrated in UK, USA, Singapore and Australia, advanced practice nurses are competent to assess patients, deliver independent nursing intervention, and monitor the patients' compliance to treatment regime. Working in close partnership with doctors and other members of health care team, care protocol can be easily developed to facilitate patients maintaining optimal health status by getting medication prescription in the community. Each hospital, public or otherwise, the nursing manpower indicators should be reviewed and manpower supply should take reference to different levels of practice.

Despite the low birth rate of Hong Kong, the shortage of midwives is a great concern. The government should look into the long term strategy and plan to adequately prepare midwives.

HKAN would like to urge Chief Executive to set out a community wide strategy and/or policy to guide the setting up of health care staff education, recruitment and retention for the benefit of the community at large. A structured collection of data and evidence is paramount to facilitate the mapping of talent to service and future health care services development. In maintaining the talent pool and reducing attrition rates of nurses, the government should put in resources to ensure adequate mentoring in clinical settings, particularly for the newly graduated nurses.

#### **4. Mandatory Continued Nursing Education**

The advent of medicine never cease, HKAN support the building up of mandatory continued nursing education system to facilitate the nurses' further development, knowledge update to better serve the community.

HKAN would urge the Chief Executive to reserve resources to set up e-platform which facilitate nurses' easy access to e-learning, e-database retrieval. This e-platform of database system would facilitate not only the nurses' self-development but also the employers' human resources planning to meet with service development. The government should also put resources to support mandatory professional continued education.

Yours sincerely,

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c.c.: Prof. Sophia CHAN – Secretary for Food and Health