

A call for all – Discussion Forum with the Chinese University of Hong Kong Pharmacy students on the proposal of establishing a Pharmacy Council in Hong Kong

As part of the pharmacy profession future, pharmacy students' opinions are vital on our road of establishing a Pharmacy Council in Hong Kong. Thereby, the Taskforce took the opportunity to meet, introduce and collect opinions from our current pharmacy students from the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) on the 18th of November 2015 in CUHK.

The forum began with one of the executive committees of the Task Force, Mr. Benjamin Kwong, walking the attendees briefly through the background and rationale behind the proposal of establishing a Pharmacy Council in Hong Kong. This was followed by Mr. Phillip Chiu, the president of the Pharmaceutical Society of Hong Kong (PSHK), who went further to discuss the vision, mission and functions of the proposed Pharmacy Council. Finally, Dr. Keary Zhou, executive committee of the Task Force, summarized on other key aspects of the proposal including the proposed compositions of the Pharmacy Council and continuing pharmacy education (CPE) etc. After the briefing, all students were invited to air their opinions on the proposal or to express any of their concerns.

Consider the transition of the current regulatory body of the Pharmacy and Poisons Board (PPB) to the proposed Pharmacy Council is of a very dramatic nature, a fourth-year pharmacy student expressed his concern in whether there will be a huge amount of barrier to such establishment. Mr. Kwong concurred to the student's concern, as such transition involved the change of a statutory body; however he pointed out that the current PPB is led by a clinician whereas the future Pharmacy Council should be led by a pharmacist and PPB is not responsible for the development opportunity and practice environment of the profession. Thus, the establishment of the Pharmacy Council should be initiated despite of potential obstacles. Another fourth-year student brought up the topic of what is the place of the proposed Pharmacy Council in controlling some of the commonly seen 'malpractice' in community pharmacies, which are relatively loosely-controlled at the moment. Dr. Zhou addressed the question by pointing out the fact that currently many private pharmacies rely heavily on non-functional activities to drive revenue or income, which not reliable at all for a healthy pharmacy business. The Pharmacy Council should look into how the public and private pharmacy market can collaborate to bring in more functional roles to community pharmacies and thereby reducing unintended malpractices.

The forum was drawn to a close at 8:30pm and the Task Force representatives encouraged all attendees to continue to express their views and be part of the progress for the profession.





