

香港藥學會

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Policy Address Consultation

The Pharmaceutical Society of Hong Kong (PSHK) would like to propose two major initiatives for the Policy Address Consultation:

1. Public Private Partnership (PPP) programme

To enhance primary care and address the imbalance in public and private healthcare resources, a series of Public Private Partnership programs in healthcare have been rolled out. PSHK suggests that there is also a pressing need to put into action for the development of PPP for pharmacy services.

The quality of pharmaceutical care under the current system is suboptimal. An audit report on HA's drug management revealed that the average prescription length for Specialist Out-patient clinic (SOPC) has increased by 7.8 days (10.2%) from 76.4 to 84.2 days during 2011-12 to 2015-16. With such long drug refill period and medical follow-up, it is not uncommon to see drug-related problems for chronic patients, including non-adherence and adverse drug events. These lead to hospital readmissions and A&E attendances which are preventable.

Besides, the infrequent drug refill and follow-up also results in tremendous amount of drug wastage. PSHK commissioned the University of Hong Kong to conduct a descriptive study in 2013 measuring the quantities of obsolete drugs (drugs no longer required by patients) from old aged homes in a delegated community pharmacy which serves 3,020 senior residents in 2012. It was found that from September 2012 to January 2013, the drug wastes amount to about 170,000 unit items of oral solid drugs, 80 litres of liquid drugs and 5 kilograms of external preparation drugs which was estimated to value at HK\$96,924. It was projected that a substantial monetary loss of HK\$5.8 million is generated annually from senior citizens living in old aged homes. Much more wastage would be expected when the elderly living at homes are included.

Public healthcare resources are tight, especially for human resources. Yet on the other hand, the human resources in the community are under-utilized. The implementation of PPP by outsourcing the dispensing and supply of repeat prescriptions to community pharmacies could solve the heavy public burden and make fuller use of the highly trained pharmacy professionals. For instance, the deployment of repeat prescriptions scheme allows patients with stable clinical conditions to obtain drugs on monthly basis from community pharmacies. Patients can choose to obtain medications at their convenient time and location, and enjoy more frequent and thorough medication therapy management from community pharmacists. This can lower the cost generated from drug-related problems and drug wastage, and allow HA to focus on secondary and tertiary healthcare services.

Opinions from pharmacy owners and community pharmacists have been gathered. Most see the benefits of PPP to both patients and the pharmacy profession. Pilot PPP programs can be launched in

certain clusters or for stable chronic patients with hypertension or diabetes, and further expand after evaluating the outcomes.

2. Health Care Voucher scheme

The Government has taken initiatives to alleviate the burden of medical expenses on elderly on primary care, such as extending the Health Care Voucher (HCV) coverage to elderly aged 65 or above, and increasing the annual voucher amount. PSHK suggests the government to also extend the coverage of HCV to community pharmacists, who play an important role in primary healthcare and can provide a broad range of health care services.

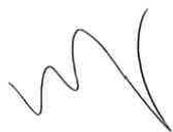
For example, chronic patients with hypertension, diabetes etc. are recommended to perform home monitoring which can facilitate healthcare providers to assess their disease management. However, many patients cannot afford the blood pressure or blood glucose monitors, and especially the test strips or lancets which require refill. PSHK would suggest the coverage of HCV for the provision of blood pressure, blood glucose etc. monitoring service by community pharmacists as part of the therapy management.

Besides, pharmacists are also fit to provide vaccination service. The immunization and vaccination of Influenza and Herpes Vaccine Vaccination currently is offered in Singapore Guardian Pharmacy which provide pharmacist to assess allergies before nurse's vaccination. Other countries such as Canada, UK, Australia and the United States allow pharmacists to vaccinate Influenza Vaccines and other selected diseases. This can greatly enhance the vaccination of patients in the community and long-term care.

By enhancing the roles of pharmacists and allocating funding for such services, patients will be encouraged to seek advice from community pharmacists for their medication therapy, and also utilize the health service provided in the community. Patients can enjoy better pharmaceutical care and disease management, instead of waiting for the whole day in A&E for minor ailments.

PSHK would continue its efforts to reflect opinions from the profession, and to equip our pharmacists for these expanded roles. We also hope to work closely with the Government to discuss on the implementation of the proposed initiatives, and achieve better pharmaceutical care for patients.

Yours sincerely,



Philip CHIU
President
The Pharmaceutical Society of Hong Kong