



"KWOK Antonio"

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To beStrong@fhb.gov.hk

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Subject Health care reform

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Dear Dr Chow,

I am a private medical practitioner of primary care. I have a few opinion about the recent discussion of the health care reform.

I think the main problem is the imbalance of the care providers of private and public sectors.

After the introduction of the so-called "quality care" of Hospital Authority by Dr EK Yeong, I had observed that there was a great shift of patients who are willing to pay for private care to the public. In addition to the economic turmoil in 2003, most patients had been highly dependent on the public care. HKSAR can never meet the unlimited needs by limited resources. Therefore, I think the reform should not only stress on the funding the health care system. The public health care system will only expand as big as possible by the proposed source of funding. This would never be able to supply care to unlimited needs.

The direction of this reform should make a firm positioning of the public health care providers (ie, HA) only to provide adequate tertiary care for serious illnesses and to provide BASIC primary care for those who are not affordable to pay for private care. It would be disastrous for HA to provide skin care, elective plastic surgery.

On the other hand, I do agree the funding should be partially supported by the insurance company. However, after a few years working as an employee in a private care group, I found that the private medical system had been eroded by the "medical card system", it which patients would only pay a few tens of dollars as co-payment during every consultation. However, the GP could only earn a hundred dollars in each consultation. Doctors who joined such scheme would only choose to jeopardise the patients' benefit by prescribing cheaper and fewer medications and poor service, as compared to those who pay cash and claim by getting receipts. It would not be ethical, but it is the truth. Reimbursing medical expenses from insurance company by patients' own would be the only feasible method of reimbursement for the coming reform.

Therefore, I urge the HKSAR would never consider "medical cards systems" in the coming reform.

Yours sincerely,

Dr KWOK