



# HONG KONG PHYSIOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION LIMITED

## 香港物理治療學會有限公司

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### 2022 Policy Address Consultation: Views from the Hong Kong Physiotherapy Association

The Hong Kong Physiotherapy Association (“Association”) is pleased to have been invited to participate in the stakeholders consultation session held on 9 August 2022. Our Association would like to raise the following issues for the Government’s consideration.

#### 1. Direct access to physiotherapy service

In the Chief Executive’s Policy Address 2021, it is stated that “The FHB will follow up with the statutory Boards and Councils of various healthcare professions on the recommendations in the Report of the Strategic Review on Healthcare Manpower Planning and Professional Development promulgated in 2017, including proposing legislative amendments to allow patients to have direct access to healthcare professional services (e.g. physiotherapy and occupational therapy) without a doctor’s referral so as to avoid delay in treatment.” Direct access brings about many benefits, including more timely physiotherapy treatment, better patient outcomes, less burden on the hospital system, and reduced healthcare cost. A proposal on physiotherapy direct access will be submitted to the Supplementary Medical Professions Council in September 2022. **The Government should continue to follow up to ensure that physiotherapy direct access is successfully implemented.**

#### 2. Grade structure review for physiotherapists

In the qualification grouping system, physiotherapists are classified under Qualification Group (QG) 3 Group I (i.e., Higher Diploma or Associate Degree Grades), with a starting salary at point 14 on the Master Pay Scale (MPS) for Physiotherapist II. However, the entry-level education of physiotherapists has been upgraded to the bachelor degree level for 28 years. The international standard for entry-level physiotherapy education, according to World Physiotherapy, is also at the bachelor level. The job duties of physiotherapists are much more diverse and complex when compared with 20-30 years ago. However, the MPS has not been adjusted to reflect this change in physiotherapy training. A Grade Structure Review was conducted for veterinary laboratory technician and medical laboratory technician grades by the Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service in 2019. **Our Association strongly recommends that a similar Grade Structure Review be done for physiotherapists.**

#### 3. Physiotherapist manpower

According to the latest commissioned study on Healthcare Manpower Projections, there will be an estimated shortfall of around 500 physiotherapists by the year of 2040. A survey conducted by our Association earlier this year involving more than 600 registered physiotherapists indicated that 30% of the respondents will be leaving the profession within 5 years. The shortage of physiotherapists will remain a serious issue for many years to come. Thus, **the Government should have a long-term plan to address the shortage of physiotherapist manpower. More funding should be injected into increasing the physiotherapy student intake quota.**