



## HONG KONG PHYSIOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION LIMITED 香港物理治療學會有限公司

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## HONG KONG OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION LIMITED

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Professor Chung-mau Lo, BBS, JP  
Secretary for Health  
The Government of HKSAR

March 17, 2023

### **Re: Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy Clinical Education**

Dear Prof. Lo,

The Hospital Authority (HA) has long been providing quality clinical training to physiotherapy and occupational therapy students. The Hong Kong Physiotherapy Association (HKPA) and the Hong Kong Occupational Therapy Association (HKOTA) are dismayed to learn that the funding allocated to HA for providing clinical education of physiotherapy and occupational therapy students would be terminated starting on April 1, 2023. Such move would be detrimental to the operation of the affected physiotherapy and occupational therapy departments, and overall quality of clinical education.

We learned that there is a plan to continue the existing posts created previously by funding from clinical education with recurrent unfilled vacancies in 2023/24 as a short-term measure. Departments need to either absorb these posts or incorporate these posts in new bids with additional deliverables. If this is the case, we worry that this may not be a practical nor a sustainable solution. The unfilled vacancies created for clinical service will be filled up with new graduates and therefore this may not be a sustainable fund source. On the other hand, the frontline staff is already experiencing huge workload and have been further stressed because of the shortage of staff. Asking these staff to bear additional workload related to training, supervision and evaluation of students is practically impossible and may pose undue risk to patients. The current attrition rate of physiotherapists and occupational therapists at HA is already very high. With such insecure arrangement and ever-increasing hardship, staff morale and the problem of staff shortage would continue to deteriorate, which is completely at odds with the recent strategies attempting to promote staff retention at HA.

Clinical education of physiotherapy and occupational therapy students at HA has long been provided by designated Clinical Educators who are senior physiotherapists and occupational therapists. Because of the expertise of these senior staff, well-structured clinical education with a good mix of clinical reasoning and practical skills training can be provided. Indeed, HA is always considered to be the best training ground for physiotherapy and occupational therapy students. Because of the high-quality clinical training received as students, the newly recruited staff are able to provide physiotherapy and occupational therapy service immediately and competently.

The day-to-day clinical service provided by physiotherapists and occupational therapists mostly involves hands-on assessment and intervention. Adequate teaching and supervision are of utmost importance in

ensuring the students and our junior therapists can master the techniques, and provide safe and effective care to patients. We solicit your support and leadership to solve the issue so as to improve staff morale, and ensure competency level of the newly recruited physiotherapists and occupational therapists at HA, and quality of patient care.

Yours Sincerely,



Prof. Marco Pang  
President  
Hong Kong Physiotherapy Association



Ms. Stella Cheng  
Chairperson  
Hong Kong Occupational Therapy Association

cc: Dr. Tony KO (Chief Executive of Hospital Authority)  
Dr. Simon TANG (Director (Cluster Services))  
Ms. Fion Yeung (Secretary of AHPGCCC)