

04 April 2023

**Statement regarding World Physiotherapy withdrawal from the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine  
Symposium on Safe and Effective Access to Multidisciplinary Services (1 April 2023)**

World Physiotherapy (formerly known as the World Confederation for Physical Therapy) is the sole international organisation representing physiotherapy on behalf of more than 600,000 physiotherapists worldwide, through its 127 member organisations. World Physiotherapy was founded in 1951 and since 1956, it has been a non-governmental organisation (NGO) in official relations with the World Health Organization.

World Physiotherapy is committed to moving physiotherapy forward and to promoting the significant role the profession plays globally in improving health and wellbeing. World Physiotherapy encourages high standards of physiotherapy research, education, and practice.

A key advocacy position of World Physiotherapy relates to support for 'direct access.' There is strong evidence around the world that direct access to physiotherapy services facilitates early intervention and prevention of injury. Direct access is highly cost-effective.

Physiotherapists who received an entry level education that follows international physiotherapy guidelines, are competent in making appropriate and timely physical diagnosis of causes that impede a person's mobility or functional capacity. A recognised structured physiotherapy curriculum provides appropriate biomedical knowledge for screening and triage to other medical disciplines when indicated ensuring each client receives a comprehensive approach of health management.

We work collaboratively with our member organisations to achieve this goal and we have recently achieved substantial progress across the globe. World Physiotherapy has been supporting the Hong Kong Physiotherapy Association advocacy in this respect for several years. Therefore, I was deeply concerned to see that the programme provided to me shortly before the event failed to consult and include physiotherapist representative bodies in this symposium.

This led to the conclusion that rather than advancing the benefits of direct access for the community at large, the symposium was aimed to silence the grass roots voice of the profession. This was unacceptable to World Physiotherapy.

Therefore, I made the difficult decision not associate myself or World Physiotherapy with this event.



**Jonathon Kruger**

Chief executive officer