

Speech by the Hon Chief Justice Andrew K N Li at the Hong Kong College of Family Physicians 25th Anniversary Celebration Scientific Meeting

President Li, Distinguished Members, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted and honoured to be here to address such a distinguished audience at the 25th Anniversary Celebration Scientific Meeting of the Hong Kong College of Family Physicians.

The Hong Kong College of Family Physicians was founded in 1977. And it is one of the founding Constituent Colleges of the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine. Since its inception, it has grown from strength to strength under the able leadership of President Li and his predecessors.

Over the past 25 years, the College has taken many initiatives and has made a signal contribution to improving the quality of primary health care and to promoting the practice of family medicine. I wish to congratulate the College for its achievements. And I would like to pay a special tribute to the group of determined and dedicated general practitioners who have led and taken part in its work over the years. Their continuous efforts and strong commitment are impressive and commendable.

We live in rapidly changing times. Only one thing is certain about the future. The pace of change is likely to accelerate in all fields of human endeavour. In such a fast changing world, the community will have rising expectations of all institutions, public and private. This is so in relation to institutions of government as well as to all is so in relation to institutions of government as well as to all professions, including the medical profession.

The most valuable asset of a profession is its collective reputation. In keeping up with a good reputation, it is important that a profession should continue to strive to improve its standards and enhance its professional development. Life long learning is now a necessity for any profession and indeed, for all of us. In this regard, the role of the College in encouraging and facilitating its Members to pursue life long professional development in family medicine is of pivotal importance.

With rising community expectations, quality assurance of medical practice is essential. On this front, I understand that the College has launched various quality assurance exercises to ensure that good standards are met by family practitioners. The Primary

Medical Care Certification process introduced in 1999 was a bold step towards this endeavour.

But ultimately, an effective regulatory system is essential for maintaining public confidence. Such a system must be fair, objective and transparent. I am delighted to see that the Medical Council as the regulatory body for the medical profession has been considering continuous improvements. I understand that a working group was set up in 2001 to consider reform. The various proposals it has recommended include the establishment of a Professional Performance Committee to deal with substandard practice. These proposals when implemented will further strengthen the regulatory regime. This will be in the interest of both the profession and the community.

The scientific meeting today provides a good forum for the exchange of ideas and cross-fertilization on many subjects which the College is working on. I applaud the Organizing Committee for their efforts in organizing this most worthwhile event. And I wish you all an enjoyable and productive meeting.

Thank you.

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