

Press Release

Mental Health Council position paper released urging gov't to form a mental health commission

HONG KONG, 11 January 2014 – In view of the inadequacy of the current mental health care system and lack of coordination among different service providers, Hong Kong Mental Health Council urges the government to set up a Mental Health Commission in order to formulate a concrete mental health policy for Hong Kong citizens; and expects to submit the position paper to the government in March, 2014.

Based on the paper, the Council conducted a public consultation between May and December last year with more than 200 organization stakeholders. The respondents largely agreed with the recommendations, and pointed out that the most concerning issue of the current mental health service provision being the Government emphasizing mainly on psychiatric medical services rather than on community-based mental health services, resulting in the lack of coordination between the two. Although mental health service has been developing rapidly in recent years, related problems surfaced at the same time, including the absence of a holistic strategy and coordination within government departments, resulting in certain manpower and resource problems. Up till today, the difficulty in securing suitable premises for Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness (ICCMW) is yet to be solved; Service delivery was also indirectly affected when the Hospital Authority and the Social Welfare Department entered into a fierce competition for manpower after their launch of the Personalized Cared Programme and ICCMW respectively in 2010.

Mico Chow, chairman of the Hong Kong Familylink Mental Health Advocacy Association has been taking care of his wife suffering from mental illness for years and he hoped the government can enhance the support for mentally ill patients and their family; as well as allocating adequate resources to develop community-based service.

The Council said Hong Kong is lagging behind other western countries in terms of driving, coordination and development of different mental health service and urged the government to form a Mental Health Commission in order to provide more comprehensive programmes on prevention, education and treatment of mental wellness.

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