

# 6 The Ethics Committee and the Professional Code and Conduct

- 6.1 The Ethics Committee (EC) is established by the Council and its functions include:-
- (a) to study and review any case relating to medical ethics or professional conduct, either on its own motion or at the request in writing of not less than 20 registered medical practitioners;
  - (b) to advise and make recommendations to the Council on matters about medical ethics and professional conduct generally.
- 6.2 The membership of the EC (as at 31 December 2004) was as follows:-
- Dr David FANG, SBS, JP (Chairman)
- Dr CHAN Chok-wan
- Dr CHAN Yee-shing
- Dr LAI Cham-fai
- Professor LEUNG Ping-chung, SBS, OBE, JP
- Dr LI Kwok-tung, Donald
- Dr LI Siu-lung, Steven
- Mrs. LING LEE Ching-man, Eleanor, SBS, OBE, JP\* (from 25 September 2004 onwards)
- Dr TAO LAI Po-wah, Julia\*\*
- Dr TSE Hung-hing
- Dr YEUNG Chiu-fat, Henry (from 1 December 2004 onwards)
- \* lay person appointed for a term of one year
- \*\* lay person appointed for a term of three years
- 6.3 The EC had reviewed paragraph 4.2.3 of the Professional Code and Conduct (the Code) with a view to providing clearer guidelines on dissemination of professional service information to the public and recommended the following changes:-
- Allowing medical practitioners in group practice to exhibit either their own individual signboards or a shared signboard for the practice.
  - Permitting the use of bona fide logos on stationery and signboards.
  - Increasing the permitted size of announcements of commencement of practice or altered conditions of practice from 100 cm<sup>2</sup> to 300 cm<sup>2</sup>.

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- Allowing the inclusion of the range of fees of medical services in Service Information Notices and Doctors Directories.
- Incorporating the Guidelines on Dissemination of Service Information through Service Information Notices and Doctors Directories into the Code.

With the endorsement of the Council, paragraphs 4.2.3.1, 4.2.3.2, 4.2.3.3, 4.2.3.6, 4.2.3.7 and the relevant Appendices of the Code were revised and promulgated in the 10<sup>th</sup> Issue of the Council's Newsletter, and the relevant parts of the Code were superseded with immediate effect.

- 6.4 In view of the increasing demand for more open information on medical services (especially after the signing of the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement), the EC had reviewed relevant sections of the Code. The EC proposed to relax some of the current restrictions on dissemination of service information by revising section 4.2.2 and adding a new paragraph 4.2.3.8 to allow doctors to publish notices containing their service information in four types of printed media, i.e. journals, magazines, newspapers and periodicals. The proposed permitted contents of the notices would follow those for Doctors Directories, and no restriction would be imposed on the frequency of the notices. Professional organizations were being consulted on the proposed amendments.
- 6.5 The EC had also reviewed paragraph 4.2.3.5 of the Code on "Internet homepages" and looked into the issue of "Doctors' attitude towards patients". The EC would draw up some recommendations in respect of these matters for consideration by the Council.
- 6.6 As it had been 4 years since the Code was revised in November 2000, the EC had formed a Working Group to draw up a draft updated version of the Code for consideration by the EC. The purview of the updating exercise was confined to the incorporation of changes which had already been approved by the Council and minor changes which would be neither substantial nor controversial.