

Government reminder on professional requirements for registered doctors to issue sick leave certificates

In response to the online circulation that a registered doctor might have issued a sick leave certificate without stating any date, a Government spokesman said today (October 6) that there are professional requirements for registered doctors to issue sick leave certificates.

Medical practitioners registered in Hong Kong should comply with the Code of Professional Conduct for the Guidance of Registered Medical Practitioners promulgated by the Medical Council of Hong Kong (MCHK).

According to the code, doctors are required to issue certificates on the basis that the truth of the contents can be accepted without question, and they should not include in the certificates statements which they have not taken appropriate steps to verify. A sick leave certificate can only be issued after proper medical consultation of the patient by the doctor, and the date of consultation and the date of issue must be truly stated in the certificate, including a certificate recommending retrospective sick leave. Any doctor who in his professional capacity gives any certificate or similar document containing statements which are untrue, misleading or otherwise improper renders himself liable to disciplinary proceedings.

The MCHK handles complaints against registered medical practitioners in accordance with the Medical Registration Ordinance and the Medical Practitioners (Registration and Disciplinary Procedure) Regulation. Upon receiving a complaint concerning the professional conduct or misconduct of a registered medical practitioner, the MCHK will deal with the case in accordance with the aforesaid ordinance and regulation.

In the past, there were cases in which doctors were convicted for issuing misleading/false medical certificates and their names were removed from the registers after investigation and inquiries by the MCHK.

The Government wishes to take this opportunity to clarify that the Prohibition on Face Covering Regulation (the Regulation) aims to deal with the use of facial covering in public meetings and processions, or at public areas to prevent identification. From a public health perspective, wearing masks is still an effective means to prevent the infections and transmission of diseases. The Regulation will not deter the public from wearing masks for health reasons.

The Government appeals to all healthcare professionals to continue to serve our fellow citizens in a professional manner, and join hands to curb the further escalation of violence in the society.