

LCQ15: Chinese medicine practitioners admitted via talent admission schemes

Following is a question by Professor the Hon Chan Wing-kwong and a written reply by the Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, in the Legislative Council today (December 13):

Question:

The Government announced on May 16, 2023 an updated Talent List (the updated List) that applies to the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme, the General Employment Policy, as well as the Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals. The updated List comprises 51 professions under nine industry segments, including Chinese medicine (CM) practitioners under the healthcare services industry. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) since the announcement of the updated List, whether there are employers which have brought in CM practitioners via the aforesaid talent admission schemes; if so, of the respective numbers of applications received and approved by the Government, as well as the numbers of CM practitioners involved; among the approved applications, the number of CM practitioners who have already come to Hong Kong;

(2) of the work contents of CM practitioners granted with visas to enter Hong Kong as mentioned in (1), including whether they will provide CM diagnostic and treatment services; and

(3) given that under the Chinese Medicine Ordinance (Cap. 549), all persons practising CM in Hong Kong must first apply for registration with the Chinese Medicine Practitioners Board of the Chinese Medicine Council of Hong Kong and apply for a practising certificate, how the authorities will perform proper gatekeeping to ensure that no CM diagnostic and treatment services will be provided by CM practitioners admitted via the aforesaid talent admission schemes until they become holders of the relevant practising certificate?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Labour and Welfare Bureau and the Immigration Department, the consolidated reply to the question raised by Professor the Hon Chan Wing-kwong is as follows:

The Government announced in May 2023 the expansion of the Talent List to cover 51 professions under nine industry segments, encompassing all 13 statutory healthcare professions (including Chinese medicine practitioners (CMPs)). The Talent List applies to the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme, the

General Employment Policy and the Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals. This initiative aims to provide immigration facilitation for healthcare professionals who have already fulfilled the prevailing local statutory registration requirements, and convey the positive message that the Government is determined to strive to attract qualified non-locally trained healthcare professionals to come to Hong Kong, giving a positive effect on drawing in talents and stabilising the manpower supply. Nonetheless, this initiative changes neither the professional qualifications nor the practising requirements for the relevant persons' practice in Hong Kong.

In accordance with the Chinese Medicine Ordinance (Cap. 549), all persons practising Chinese medicine (CM) in Hong Kong are required to apply to the Chinese Medicine Practitioners Board (CMPB) of the Chinese Medicine Council of Hong Kong for registration as a CMP. Any non-locally trained CMP (including non-Hong Kong resident) who wishes to be a registered CMP in Hong Kong can take and pass the Chinese Medicine Practitioners Licensing Examination (CMPLE) (Note) before making such an application for registration. Registered CMPs must hold valid practising certificates to practise CM in Hong Kong.

CMPs who wish to enjoy immigration facilitation under the Talent List through applications to the three aforesaid talent admission schemes have to hold qualifications registrable in Hong Kong under the Ordinance. Taking the example of registered CMPs, non-Hong Kong residents who fulfill the training requirements for CM practice, take and pass the CMPLE, and after completing registration and obtaining practising certificates, are provided with immigration facilitation under the Talent List to work and practise as a registered CMP in Hong Kong.

Since the expansion of the Talent List and as of October 31, 2023, none of the three aforesaid talent admission schemes has received or approved any application fulfilling the professional qualifications for CMPs as required under the Talent List.

Note: The CMPLE is open to any person who has completed an undergraduate degree course of training in CM practice or its equivalent as approved by the CMPB. There is no requirement that candidates must be Hong Kong residents.