



醫護行者 Health In Action

To eliminate health inequity in societies 消除社會上的健康不公平

Ms. Chan Mei Yi
Sr Social Work Officer (Family)2

17th January 2019

Dear Ms. Chan,

Submission Paper to Social Welfare Department Regarding the Designated Outreaching Team for Ethnic Minority

Submission from Health In Action

We are delighted to hear the government is paying attention to the needs of ethnic minorities concerning education, employment and different kinds of social service; however, **we saw the insufficient coverage on any health policies**. Therefore, this submission paper highlights and illustrates the needs in the health of ethnic minorities (South-Asian population) and suggestions to the government. Health In Action believes “health in all policies”. We urge the Social Service Department new outreaching team equip “a healthy mindset” in the case management and strategy which is also an effective intervention approach in Health in Action’s experience to engage EM community.

Given Health In Action’s frontline experience in providing health services, education, and training to ethnic minorities in Hong Kong, we wish to highlight the following concerns and suggestions to promote health equity for all in our city:

1. Promote health social resources to enhance EM health

Researchers found ethnic minorities have poorer health than the Chinese population. For example, compared with Chinese diabetes patients, the ethnic minorities were much younger and more obese. Deficiencies exist in the comprehensive management of diabetes in these ethnic minorities, particularly concerning glycaemic control¹. On the other hand, health information such as medical interpretation service and other medical resources are not well promoted and fully utilized in the community. These result in health inequality to the ethnic minority population.

Suggestion:

- a. *We suggest the outreaching team promote different social resources including different health resources in the community, e.g. medical interpretation service in hospital.*
- b. *Health In Action would like to assist in spreading accurate and professional health knowledge and resources to support the outreaching team.*



2. Build social workers' healthcare awareness and capability to address EM health needs

The outreaching team is a reliable channel to engage with the EM community. We believe the outreaching team must encounter different situations including health condition. Therefore, Health In Action believes the outreaching team needs medical knowledge backup when they encounter any health issue. Moreover, an effective communication channel should be established with a medical organization to tackle a client's health problems

Suggestion:

- a. We suggest the outreach team act as the safeguard of EM community health and channel clients with health problems to a suitable health institution.*
- b. Health In Action would like to provide our professional opinion on how to assess a client's health condition and provide health management training to clients engaged and workers.*

We are delighted to contribute more ideas or suggestions for promoting ethnic minority health. We look forward to the reply and hope to arrange a meeting in the future.

Reference:

1. C. Chen & KH Chen (2014), Type 2 diabetes management in Hong Kong ethnic minorities: what primary care physicians need to know. Available from: <http://www.hkmj.org/abstracts/v20n/222.htm>. Accessed Nov 2018
2. Legislative Council (2018), 醫院管理局為少數族裔病人提供的傳譯服務. Available from: <https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201803/21/P2018032100242p.htm>. Accessed Nov 2018

Background of Health In Action

For years, HIA has lobbied with Legislative Councilors for a system to systemically mark down patients' preferred languages when recording their particulars, to facilitate the arrangement for interpretation services in public hospitals and clinics². Hospital Authority has considered our suggestion and is now exploring a new initiative to record patients' preferred languages in their electronic profiles which will help streamline the procedures of arranging interpretation services for patients in future.

Our Research and Advocacy Coordinator Mr. Anthony Lai will be delighted to hear from the department to coordinate the meeting. He can be reached at anthonylai@hia.org.hk or 9619 1577.

Thank you for your attention and we look forward to your favourable reply.



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Yours faithfully,
Dr. Fan Ning
Chairman
Health In Action

***Health in Action** was established in 2011 and is a registered non-governmental organization in Hong Kong. Our vision is to eliminate health inequity in societies and we firmly believe that health is a fundamental human right for all, irrespective of race, religion, gender or political affiliation. We aspire to drive positive social change through cycles of service, research, and advocacy. Our current target beneficiaries include local working poor families, ethnic minorities, and refugees. Health in Action is a member of the Hong Kong Council of Social Service and is in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council.*