PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

While the beginning of the new year marks another new chapter to every one of us, may I also take this opportunity to trace the remarkable journey of the HKDA Council in the past year, a journey of collaboration that will continue in 2019 not just for the development of the profession, but also for contribution towards livelihood improvement.

CCF Elderly Dental Assistance Programme

As announced in 2018 Policy Address, the target beneficiaries of the CCF Elderly Dental Assistance Programme (「關愛基金長者牙科服務資助項目」) will be expanded to cover Old Age Living Allowance (OALA) recipients aged 65 or above in the fourth phase of Programme expansion in February 2019. After a series of constructive discussion with the Food and Health Bureau, we managed to make a significant step forward by implementing certain refinement measures to provide greater convenience for meeting the real needs of beneficiaries. During the process, we have taken into account participating dentists’ valuable input and also the general oral health condition of the lower age group of the eligible population. Members may refer to P.10 on the “CCF Elderly Dental Assistance Programme Corner” for report on details about implementation of the refinement measures.

Way Towards Total Ban on Smoking

In realizing smoking as one of the significant risk factors resulting hazards to health such as periodontal disease, oral and lung cancer, we are delighted to see the Government’s proposed legislation for a total ban on e-cigarettes and other new smoking products in 2018. While appreciating the Government’s target of further reducing smoking prevalence of persons aged 15 or above in its Policy Address, we notice there is still a long way to go before the total ban on all kinds of tobacco products to protect Hong Kong citizens from the hazards. We had therefore proposed the Government in writing about the imminent need of drawing up a definite timeline towards a total prohibition of smoking. We are of view that a substantial increase in the tobacco duty from time to time can be an effective tool to help suppress the prevalence of smoking.

Review of the Memorandum and Articles of Association of HKDA Ltd

In the year ahead, we will commit our effort in handling numerous critical tasks, including the review of the Memorandum and Articles of Association of HKDA Ltd mainly on the voting method and proceedings pertaining to postal ballot and adoption of the new Model Articles of the Companies Ordinance. On 2 January 2019, the Council has sent out the Survey on Proposed Amendment to HKDA M&A to widely consult members’ opinions on this important subject. What we do hope for, or what the Council is working towards, is making amendments to meet the development needs and sharpen the operational efficiency of the Association. After all, your full support is indispensable to the success of our work. The final timeline of execution will also depend on the progress of all necessary procedural arrangement and legal requirements. Members are invited to go through P.13 on the “Special Column – 4th Progress Report by Task Force on Review of M&A of HKDA” for more.

Revision to the Code of Professional Discipline for the Guidance of Dental Practitioners in Hong Kong

In March 2018, we had put forward the Association’s views over the Dental Council of Hong Kong’s (DCHK) proposed revisions to the Code of Professional Discipline for the Guidance of Dental Practitioners in Hong Kong. We are pleased to learn that the DCHK has given favorable consideration to HKDA’s viewpoints presented.
Review of the Dentists Registration Ordinance (DRO)

Another policy-related mission that we carried out is the submission of views to the DCHK over the proposed review of the DRO in early January 2019, after collecting members’ opinions through the Focus Group Consultation on 12 December 2018 and another Consultation Forum on 19 December 2018 open to all members. The Vice-President and I in my capacity of President had also reached out different parties such as HKDA Past Presidents, representatives from the University of Hong Kong Dental Alumni Association, employers and employees working in the private sector via different platforms for views collection. The opinions gathered were submitted to the DCHK for consideration on 7 January 2019. Members may get access to the relevant documents which are now made available on HKDA website for viewing. Please log into “Members” area and click “Consultation on Government Policies / Submission” for the documents or simply scan this QR code for our submission.

Informed Consent

The Association wishes to also express its special thanks to the Hong Kong Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons, the Young Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon Group of Hong Kong and Discipline of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery, Faculty of Dentistry, HKU for the composition of the “Informed Consent for Surgery” and “Matters need attention upon tooth / teeth removal”. Such materials, together with the “Points to Note / Consider for an Informed Consent” were disseminated by post among members in December 2018 for their reference. They are also downloadable from HKDA website under “Useful Reference” in “Members” area.

Notes on Dental Practice Operation in Hong Kong

To enhance members’ provision of quality dental service, another collaboration between the Association and the Hong Kong Society of Family Dentistry on updating a reference material titled “Notes for Dental Practice Operation in Hong Kong” is underway. The Notes will highlight areas related to legislative requirements for practising dentistry in Hong Kong.

Private Healthcare Facilities Ordinance

The Private Healthcare Facilities Ordinance (PHFO) was gazetted on 30 November 2018. Under the Ordinance, operators of small practice clinics may ask the Department of Health for a letter of exemption to operate the clinics without a licence. Each registered dentist may operate at most three small practice clinics with valid exemption at the same time. For the full details, please visit: (https://www.dh.gov.hk/english/main/main_orph/main_orph.html) and refer to Part 4 of the Ordinance about the exemption arrangement. (https://www.gld.gov.hk/egazette/pdf/20182248/es12018224834.pdf)

To help members getting a better understanding of the prevailing legislation relevant to the operation of a PHF, we are most pleased to have invited representatives from Food and Health Bureau to give elaboration at Monthly Meeting on 27 February 2019. Stay tuned for the announcement and take part in due course.

Furtherance of HKDA Communication Platforms

On strengthening communication with members and the public, we have allocated resources to modernize our tools for release of information and updates on activities by developing HKDA apps and renovating HKDA website in 2019, subsequent to our giving rebirth of HKDA Directory for circulation among members by end 2018.

These are some more development areas that, we are confident, will help make the dental profession even more resilient and competitive. On that note, may I join the HKDA Council to wish you all good health and a prosperous new year ahead.