

## Strengthen Medical Profession and Create a Win-Win Situation

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Rapid social changes in recent years, such as implementation of National Health Insurance (NHI), active consumers' movement, complex physician-patient relationship, and increasing malpractice disputes, have created a huge impact on the medical scenario as well as medical quality in Taiwan. Adhering to its core values based on humanity, professionalism and innovation, and oriented to quality assurance, the Taiwan Medical Association (TMA) leads the medical professionals to achieve better healthcare and improved quality of service.

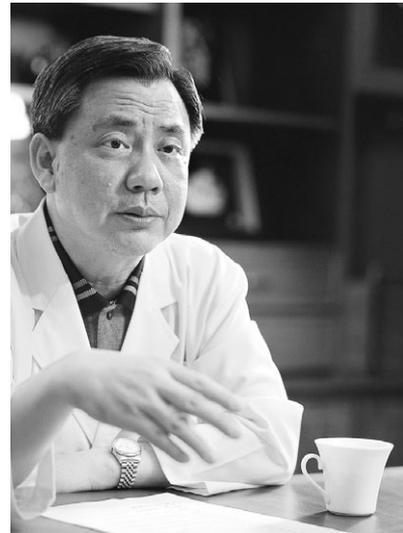
The TMA identified the following as high priority tasks;

### Ensure Quality Health Care for All

Paul Krugman, the 2008 Nobel Prize winner in economics, once praised Taiwan's National Health Insurance system as a good model for the Bush Administration because the comprehensive system covered the whole population within a short time span and the system was managed well enough with minor increase in premium. It demonstrated once more the high satisfaction for NHI in Taiwan.

As a matter of fact, the high satisfaction for NHI has been built on the plummeting income of all physicians, due to an unfair remuneration framework for physicians and hospitals. The privilege of people in Taiwan to enjoy the most convenient, cost-effective and efficient healthcare is gradually exhausting the overall healthcare environment in the long run.

The TMA is the legally acknowledged national professional group in the country, acting as a representative body for all physicians to negotiate with the concerned authorities. We have been



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working hard to enact a reform of the health insurance payment system, to make a fair deal that provides justified recognition to the contribution of doctors and medical institutes.

### Advocate for Legislation of Malpractice Disputes Resolution

The past decade saw a growing number of malpractice disputes. Legal actions involve significant time, energy and cost for both parties. Under the threat of lawsuits, physicians are compelled to practice conservative or defensive medicine in order to prevent disputes, which is not necessarily benefiting the patients and may even increase medical cost as a result. The fear of facing civil and criminal liabilities has already made a negative impact on many outstanding physicians who opted out from areas involved in higher risks.

The TMA urges the health authorities to introduce legislation for dispute resolution as soon as possible so that physicians, patients and the legal department can all benefit from a dispute settlement mechanism that lessens disputes, mandates

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settlement prior to litigation and reduces avoidable use of legal resources.

### **Participate in Global Health and Strengthen Relation with National Medical Associations around the World**

Participation in global health affairs prevents Taiwan from being isolated from the rest of world. More over, it provides access to health information for physicians in every field. The TMA hopes to connect itself with all national medical associations around the world and become part of the network. Eventually, we will help all physicians in Taiwan incorporate in the global medical family to share responsibilities as well as to enjoy due benefits.

We maintain close communication with the World Medical Association (WMA) and actively take part in drafting or amending declarations and resolutions.

In 2008 we participated in making several statements including medical quality, stem cell research, and zoonoses, etc. Expert opinions from Taiwan are heard and included in WMA's official

statements that become international standards.

In addition to WMA, we also strengthen relationships with national medical associations around the globe. To advance friendship with the Japan Medical Association (JMA) and express thanks for the President of JMA Yoshihito Karasawa who has been dedicatedly helping Taiwan's bid to participate in the WHO for many years, the TMA sent a delegation to visit the JMA in September 2008. During the meeting with our counterpart, we discussed and exchanged views on critical issues such as health insurance financing and litigations over disputes. We believe such constructive dialogues will be of great help when dealing with healthcare challenges in Taiwan.

### **Conclusion**

The first and foremost mission of TMA is to establish a sound medical environment where rights of physicians are protected, and people's welfare is enhanced. Years-long efforts have seen some positive results, based on which we will continue to work towards creation of a patient-centered healthcare environment.



Study meeting for patient safety