SUBJECT: REQUEST FROM SUPERVISOR MCHUGH TO ADOPT A BOARD POLICY RESOLUTION RELATING TO THE PARTICIPATION OF TAIWAN IN THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

RECOMMENDATION: Support

Recommendation:
Supervisor McHugh is requesting the Board to adopt a Board Policy Resolution to state support for Taiwan to participate in the World Health Organization. Staff recommends that the Legislative Committee accept Supervisor McHugh’s recommendation.

Background and Analysis:
The World Health Organization (WHO) is the United Nations’ specialized agency for health. The WHO’s objective is the attainment by all people of the highest possible health. The WHO is governed by 193 member states through the World Health Assembly, which meets in Geneva each year.

Taiwan was a member of WHO until 1972 when it was replaced by the People’s Republic of China as the official government representing China. This action reflected the “one China” policy that the United Nations and many states, including the United States, adopted at the time. Since 1997, Taiwan has unsuccessfully sought participation in the WHO. In May 2007, the World Health Assembly will again consider Taiwan’s request to participate in the WHO with non-voting representatives.

Taiwan is seeking observer status with the WHO in an effort to obtain direct and immediate access to the WHO’s up-to-date disease control information. As a non-member, Taiwan is unable to quickly acquire the information needed for disease control and prevention. Additionally, Taiwan’s health officials and medical professionals are excluded from any WHO forums and workshops on issues ranging from diagnosis, monitoring, and controlling newly emerging infectious diseases. Taiwan’s lack of involvement in the WHO increases the risk of infection to its residents and travelers to the area. There may also be cross-border, multi-country spread of various infectious diseases when people travel to and from Taiwan.

In June 2004, President Bush signed Public Law 108-235 in support of Taiwan’s effort to participate in the WHO. A number of other organizations also support Taiwan quest. They include the European Parliament, the State of Utah, the World Health Professions Alliance, the World Medical Association, the Standing Committee of European Doctors, the International College of Surgeons, and the British Medical Association.

Staff recommends support of Supervisor McHugh’s request to adopt a Board Policy Resolution to state support for Taiwan to participate in the World Health Organization.
The Legislative Committee recommends support of a Board Policy Resolution relating to the participation of Taiwan in the World Health Organization.