

PRESS RELEASE 新聞稿

Hospital Authority Building, 147B, Argyle Street, Kowloon, Hong Kong

Thursday, 29 November 2007

Public Hospitals to Pilot Initiatives in Doctor Work Reform Recommendation Report

Members of the Hospital Authority (HA) Board discussed the Doctor Work Reform Recommendation Report submitted by the Steering Committee on Doctor Work Hour at the Administrative and Operational Meeting today (Thursday, 29 November).

The HA Chairman, Mr Anthony Wu, said Members welcomed the recommended work reform strategies of the Steering Committee and supported the directions of reform in general.

“Doctor Work Reform is a key priority area under HA’s ‘People First’ strategy and it carries the three-fold objectives of quality patient care through teamwork, risk management for enhanced patient safety as well as quality doctor hours for service and training.”

“On behalf of the HA, I would like to extend our sincere thanks to the Steering Committee under the lead of Dr C H Leong for its dedicated work and tremendous contribution to the corporate reform. The Report is the outcome of constructive exchanges and concerted efforts of all. Stakeholders’ engagement and opinions have played a crucial part in shaping the reform strategies.”

“HA is particularly grateful for the precious views and suggestions of all frontline doctors, doctors’ associations and unions, clinical heads, the nursing profession, management colleagues as well as the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine and its constituent Colleges to make the reform possible and successful in future,” Mr Wu remarked.

The Steering Committee, established in October 2006, is tasked to formulate strategies and implementation plans with a view to reducing, within three years, the work hours of doctors to not exceeding 65 in a week and their continuous work hours to a reasonable level.

To solicit a wide spectrum of views and suggestions, a consultation paper was sent to each of some 4,500 HA doctors and the Academy in May 2007. In the third round of HA-wide communication that followed, HA recorded more than 1,100 doctor attendances in 61 communication sessions with the frontline staff. Four briefings were held for members of the Academy and three exchanges were made with the nursing profession. Over 140 pieces of written feedback on the reform were received by the Steering Committee, and each and every view of the stakeholders has been duly considered in the final Report.

Dr C H Leong, Chairman of the Steering Committee, expressed that “The Committee has taken on an open approach in formulating the strategies of Doctor Work Reform. We have come up with a local reform model founded on wide consultation and engagement with stakeholders and professional organisations. Yet, while the reform seeks to improve doctors’ working conditions and patient safety, it cannot be taken along without improving staff morale.”

To facilitate gradual rollout of reform to all public hospitals, HA will embark on a number of pilot programmes in seven hospitals of four Clusters, commencing the end of 2007, to verify the efficacy of the reform strategies. Additional manpower, including doctors, nurses, allied health and supporting staff, will be recruited for the pilot programmes.

The Kowloon West Cluster will be the major site for pilot reform whereas individual pilot programmes will be implemented in the Hong Kong East, Kowloon East and New Territories East Clusters. Apart from \$19 million already allocated for development of Emergency Medicine wards in four public hospitals, HA will further deploy \$12 million in 2007/08 to run four pilot programmes, namely, (a) opening of extra weekday operating theatre sessions, (b) establishment of Emergency Medicine wards, (c) introduction of 24-hour Technical Care Assistant service, and (d) employment of part-time doctors to help out in specialist out-patient consultations and other clinical duties. The pilot programmes will be run for six to nine months.

HA has delegated the Steering Committee to oversee the pilot programmes and report the outcomes to the HA Board at intervals, as its Members have already mastered the underlying issues of reform and had thorough understanding of the local health system.

HA will make the Report available to all concerned parties. All staff and the general public may also access the Report and the HA Response Statement in full via HA’s intranet and internet websites (<http://www.ha.org.hk>) respectively for reference.

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