

# PRESS RELEASE 新聞稿

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

Thursday, 25 February 2010

## **Doctor Work Reform to continue after Pilot**

Members of the Hospital Authority (HA) Board discussed and endorsed the Final Report on Doctor Work Reform submitted by the Steering Committee on Doctor Work Hour (the Steering Committee) at the Administrative and Operational Meeting today (Thursday 25 February).

The Doctor Work Reform started in October 2006 with the objectives to reduce public doctors' average weekly work hours and their continuous work hours to a reasonable level while ensuring the quality of care and patient safety. The Steering Committee was entrusted to oversee the reform implementation.

In submitting the Final Report to the HA Board, the Committee Chairman Dr Leong Che-hung said, "Doctor Work Reform is not meant as a numbers' game nor to nourish a clock-watching culture among health carers. Rather, the reform is about better teamwork and explicit sharing of responsibilities to provide better and more efficient patient care."

"The reform cannot be taken along without improving staff morale. Its success is the concerted efforts of all and HA is recommended to keep the momentum of reform in order to improve the working conditions of frontline doctors in public hospitals."

HA Chairman, Mr Anthony Wu, expressed appreciation and gratitude for all the efforts made by the Steering Committee under the lead of Dr Leong throughout the reform phases, from stakeholder consultation and strategy formulation, pilot reform implementation and monitoring, to management reporting and recommendations made to the Board in the past years.

"The entire Doctor Work Reform represents the collective wisdom of many and the concerted efforts of all health carers at the pilot sites," remarked Mr Wu.

He added that the report submitted by the Steering Committee to the Board have laid the key milestones of reform and provided useful references for implementing similar work reform strategies in the organisation in future.

HA Chief Executive, Mr Shane Solomon, highlighted the pilot work reform programmes started since the end of 2007, which include the deployment of doctors to pressurised areas; re-engineering of emergency operating theatre services; establishment of Emergency Medicine wards; and introduction of care technician services.

“There are other supplementary programmes implemented to support the work reform, including the enhancement of senior nurse coverage; introduction of a common ward language to all hospital clusters; strengthening the core competency of health carers; and piloting an electronic handover system,” added Mr Solomon.

“We are delighted to see that good improvement has been made in doctors’ working conditions as evidenced in the drop of doctors working for over 65 hours per week on average from 18% in September 2006 to 4.8% by the end of December 2009.”

In the rank of Medical Officers/Resident, the proportion of doctors working for more than 65 hours per week on average has dropped from 24% to 7 % while that of senior doctors from 3.6% to 0.6%, with the most significant improvement witnessed in the specialties of Neurosurgery, Paediatrics, Surgery, Oncology, Obstetrics & Gynaecology, and Medicine.

Improvements were also observed in reducing continuous work hours. “The number of doctors undertaking on-site on-call duties for more than 24 hours at one go has dropped from 340 in 2006 to 221 on the snapshot weekday in 2009,” he said. Correspondingly, the proportion of overnight on-site on-call doctors having post-call time-off the next day has thus increased from 65% in 2006 to 82.4% on the snapshot day in 2009.

He pledged that HA will consolidate the experience in the pilot phase and maintain the momentum of reform. “HA will continue to address doctors’ prolonged work hour issues and strive to attain the 65-hour per week cap for all frontline doctors in the coming years and bring down their continuous work hours to reasonable levels in the long term.”

The Final Report on Doctor Work Reform (English only) submitted by the Steering Committee on Doctor Work Hour and the HA Response (English and Chinese) have been posted on HA website <http://www.ha.org.hk/report/DWR> for public viewing.

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