



25 February 2010

**HA Response to Final Report on Doctor Work Reform
Submitted by
Steering Committee on Doctor Work Hour**

The Hospital Authority had the following response to the Final Report on Doctor Work Reform submitted by the Steering Committee on Doctor Work Hour (the Steering Committee) today (25 February 2010):

- (a) HA expresses appreciation and gratitude for all the efforts made by the Steering Committee under the lead of Dr C H LEONG throughout the reform phases, from stakeholder consultation and strategy formulation, pilot reform implementation and monitoring, to management reporting and recommendations made to the HA 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; and the DWR Recommendation Report, the Interim Pilot Review Report and the Final Report on DWR have laid the key milestones of reform and provided useful references for implementing similar work reform strategies in the organization in future.
- (b) The attainments in the pilot phase have proven that the work reform strategies are efficacious to improve doctors' working conditions and ensure the quality of care and patient safety. HA will consolidate the experience, keep the momentum of reform, continue the strategies to complement the present work hour target and keep on monitoring the reform outcomes through established mechanisms. Besides, HA will prudently and strategically deploy its healthcare resources to pressurised areas and introduce pragmatic solutions to manage the growing service demand, enhance the service quality and safety, and nurture a skilled and high performing workforce in order to meet the evolving healthcare needs of the society. HA will gradually shift from acute and hospital care to a focus on wellness and community care options; while partnership with both the private sector and patients will continue to improve patient care and reduce service demand in the public sector. Moreover, the traditional care models will be revamped with redesigned roles and processes plus optimal use of staff and technology in the care process.

- (c) HA recognises the significant improvements made to doctor work hour in the past years on the one hand, and the bunch of factors which have confounded full attainment of the corporate work hour targets on the other. While the doctor work hour data furnish an index of doctors' average working conditions in different specialties on the basis of their rostered on-site hours in the past reporting cycle, HA will continue to address doctors' prolonged work hour issues and strive to attain the 65-hour/week cap for all frontline doctors in the coming years and bring down their continuous work hours to reasonable levels in the long term. Problematic areas will be identified in clinical departments which are yet to attain satisfactory work hour outcomes. The hospital management will look into issues of concern in these departments and help them solve the problems by providing direction and support. Moreover, HA will take into account doctors' working conditions in different clinical specialties in its manpower planning; and resources will be deployed as appropriate through the annual planning process in order to improve doctors' work-life balance and sustain long-term improvements in their working conditions.
- (d) In response to the Court of Appeal's judgment on doctors' claims, HA has embarked on a series of consultations to revamp doctors' on-call system. A Task Force has been set up to consider any possible strategies in a bottom-up approach so as to comply with the court's requirement for giving doctors genuine day-offs without restrictions for being on-call on holidays, while making responsible use of public money and ensuring patient safety at all times. HA will engage and keep all stakeholders widely informed of its deliberations, and will take this opportunity to move forward to improve the working lives of clinical colleagues and ultimately improve patient care in public hospitals.
- (e) HA is highly concerned with doctors' morale and specialist training under the new work hour arrangements. HA will follow the Steering Committee's recommendation to continue communicating with the frontline doctors and collect their feedback to further improve their morale and working conditions. On the other hand, HA will work closely with the Academy to monitor the long-term impacts of the work hour targets on doctors' training in different specialties.
- (f) Last but not least, the reform attainments are the outcome of earnest support and dedicated efforts of all stakeholders and service partners. HA would like to extend its warmest thanks to all who are involved, in particular for the precious views and participation of all frontline doctors, doctors' associations and unions, the nursing colleagues, the hospital management and senior executives as well as the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine.

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