

## Measures to Strengthen Medical Workforce and Boost Staff Morale

### (A) Recruitment of Doctors

#### *Active recruitment of full-time doctors*

HA has over the years actively recruited doctors from both local and overseas sources. During 2010 to 2014, HA in a year could recruit on average about 240 local graduates (about 95% of total graduates in a year), 15 to 30 overseas graduates who have passed the Licentiate Medical Examination and 10 doctors from private sector. Since 2012, HA has commenced recruitment of non-local doctors to practise in HA through limited registration with the Medical Council of Hong Kong, as one of the additional measures to address the doctors' manpower shortage. As of March 2015, the Medical Council of Hong Kong has altogether approved in total 23 applications of non-local doctors under limited registration submitted by HA. Currently, there are 13 non-local doctors working in HA hospitals under that scheme.

#### *Employment of part-time doctors*

2. HA has introduced an enhanced and unified pay package for employment of part-time doctors in all specialties, and has made proactive efforts to retain some of the doctors who have retired or resigned to work part time for the organisation. As a result, the number of part-time doctors has increased from 129 in 2010 (48 FTE) to 349 as at February 2015 (129 FTE).

### (B) Retention of Doctors

#### *Enhancement of promotion prospect*

3. Since 2011-12, HA has launched a centrally coordinated additional promotion mechanism for Associate Consultant to recognise and reward meritorious doctors who have served HA for five years or more after obtaining fellowship. Under the mechanism, additional Associate Consultants will be appointed to meet the operational needs while improving the promotion prospects for doctors. Since inception of the exercise in 2011, a total of 325 specialist doctors as at April 2015 have been selected for appointment as Associate Consultants.

### ***Enhanced recognition to doctors through improved honorarium schemes***

4. Since 2012, HA has enhanced its Fixed-rate Honorarium Scheme which is applicable to doctors to recognise their need to work consistently long hours by nature of their duties. The revised Fixed-rate Honorarium Scheme has raised the honorarium of the existing two tiers from \$1,750 and \$3,500 to \$2,750 and \$4,750 respectively, and introduced a third tier rate of \$5,750 to compensate those doctors who work in departments with exceptionally frequent overnight on-site call duties. In addition, the Special Honorarium Scheme (hourly rate), which aims to address short term manpower constraint issues, has also been enhanced to facilitate operation of extra service sessions to meet operational needs of individual hospitals under special projects.

### ***Exemption of pregnant doctors from overnight on-site duties***

5. HA has since 2011 effected exemption to pregnant doctors from overnight on-site calls during the advanced stage of their pregnancy from the 32<sup>nd</sup> week of pregnancy as far as possible.

### ***Enhanced training support with standardisation in granting of examination leave and reimbursement of examination fees***

6. To enhance provision of training support to doctors, HA has standardised the practice of granting full pay study leave to doctors sitting for higher qualification examination, and provided reimbursement of examination fees to eligible doctors.

### ***Enhancement of training opportunities***

7. HA attaches great importance to the training and development of its doctors. Continuous efforts are made in enhancing professional training opportunities for medical staff, including commissioned training as well as overseas training programmes, sponsorships etc. to enhance professional competence and clinical skills and keep abreast of rapid medical developments and technological advancements. As an example, intensive courses of simulation training are provided to doctors engaged in the provision of high-risk clinical services as well as team-based patient care.

## **(C) Reduce Workload of Doctors**

### ***Introduction of care technician service support***

8. As a strategy to relieve doctors and nurses from technical tasks and mundane activities, HA has been recruiting care technicians since 2008 and training more care technicians to provide round-the-clock blood-taking, electrocardiogram and intravenous cannulation service. These additional staff are now available in all acute public hospitals.

### ***Improvement of working conditions***

9. All HA employees are conditioned to work a fixed number of hours per week. Because of the need to provide round-the-clock continual care to patients, doctors are required to perform on-call duties and work additional hours from time to time.

10. Various doctor work reform programmes were implemented in 2007 and as a result, there have been significant improvements in doctor's working conditions both in terms of average weekly work hours and continuous work hours. The proportion of doctors working for more than 65 hours per week on average has dropped from 18% in December 2006 to 4.6% by the end of December 2013. As an ongoing effort to monitor the working conditions of doctors, HA has established a corporate mechanism and adopted a structured, broad-brush and prospective approach in monitoring doctors' rostered hours of on-site work over a 26-week reporting cycle. Full-scale monitoring of doctors' working hours for all specialties has been conducted from July to December every alternate year since 2009.