

HA improves presentation of elective surgery waiting time information

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) today (July 31) updated on its website the waiting time information for new case booking for Specialist Outpatient Clinic (SOPC) services and elective surgery in the latest quarter. At the same time, a new presentation of waiting time information for elective surgeries for cataract and total joint replacement has been introduced to show the actual waiting time of patients having their surgeries performed. The new presentation aims at enhancing the transparency and the relevance of the waiting time information as a reference for patients in their treatment plan decisions.

The HA Chief Manager (Quality and Standards), Dr Lau Ka-hin, said, "For instance, the previous presentation of 'notional (estimated average) waiting time' has presumed a constant surgery service capacity against a snapshot of the number of patients waiting. In fact, the overall service capacity of surgical operations, number of elective and emergency surgeries performed and the actual number of patients waiting are continuously changing. Hence, the 'notional (estimated average) waiting time' may not reflect the actual waiting time situation."

"The new presentation provides the actual waiting time information of patients having their surgeries performed, reflecting the real service situation. This presentation is similar to the statistical presentations of other HA services such as SOPC new case booking and Accident and Emergency waiting time, by presenting the actual instead of projected situation. This will be more comprehensible to patients and facilitate their decision-making."

Dr Lau emphasised that the waiting time information on the website is presented as a reference only. Patients waiting for surgeries are having regular follow-ups at the SOPCs, with clinicians' scheduling the surgery dates according to clinical condition and urgency for operation. "Doctors will review the patient's latest situation and provide appropriate treatment during the regular follow-up appointments, while the timing of surgery will also be adjusted according to patient's latest clinical condition."

With an ever-growing number of patients waiting for elective surgeries and prolonged waiting time, the HA continues to implement various improvement measures. For instance, the HA has reviewed the waiting list of total joint replacement surgery to delete duplicated bookings and completed surgery cases so as to release more operation timeslots. Meanwhile, non-surgical treatments will be provided to patients to alleviate their clinical condition while waiting.

The HA will continue to allocate resources, through the annual plan

exercise, to various Cluster programmes to enhance surgical services in the long term.

The HA also updated SOPC new case booking waiting time information today. Members of the public are welcome to browse the information on the HA website or the mobile application "HA Touch".