

Hospital Authority Board approves honorarium revision and pay enhancement proposal

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

At the Administrative and Operational Meeting today (March 28), the Hospital Authority (HA) Board discussed and approved the enhancement of the Fixed-rate Honorarium (FRH) for doctors and the pay enhancement proposal for Patient Care Assistants (PCAs), Operation Assistants (OpAs) and Executive Assistants (EAs) to boost staff morale, retain staff and attract new recruits to alleviate work pressure of front-line staff. The enhancement measures will take effect on April 1.

The HA spokesperson said that the Government has recently announced the provision of additional recurrent funding of \$700 million for the HA in the 2019-20 Budget to implement a basket of measures to retain staff and improve staff remuneration and promotion opportunities. The additional funding will be allocated to, inter alia, the enhancement of the FRH and pay for PCAs, OpAs and EAs.

"The FRH for doctors is granted on a monthly basis as recognition to eligible doctors who are required to work consistently long hours in order to maintain adequate medical services for patients. The HA introduced improvements to the FRH in early 2012 to divide the rates into three tiers according to the average weekly work hours and the frequency of overnight on-site call duties. The meeting today endorsed the adjustment proposal of increasing the rate of the first tier from \$2,750 to \$4,300, the second tier from \$4,750 to \$7,400 and the third tier from \$5,750 to \$9,000," the spokesperson said.

With regard to the pay enhancement for PCAs, OpAs and EAs, the spokesperson said a unified pay rise at 8 per cent will be offered to new recruits and serving staff. For instance, the pay range for a PCA IIIB will be adjusted upwards to \$11,866 to \$14,064 while the pay range for a PCA I will be adjusted upwards to \$21,389 to \$25,199. Currently, there are around 25 000 PCAs, OpAs and EAs working in the HA.

A consultancy firm was appointed earlier by the HA to study the manpower issues of PCAs, OpAs and EAs. Upon the completion of the Phase 1 study, the HA has decided to implement the pay enhancement for PCAs, OpAs and EAs to retain staff and attract more new recruits to alleviate the prevailing work pressure of front-line staff. The second phase of the consultancy study will continue to review the grade structure, training and career development with a view to attracting and retaining staff in the long run to serve patients. The HA will continue to listen to views from different stakeholders for consideration in the second phase of the study.

The HA spokesperson expressed gratitude again to all front-line staff for their dedication to serve the public given the current manpower shortfall.