

Hospital Authority implements new staff retention policies

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) Board today (September 23) discussed two new policies, namely the arrangement of extending employment beyond the retirement age of 60 up to 65 and the creation of a new rank of Associate Nurse Consultant (ANC) to enhance the nursing grade career structure.

"Facing the current retirement wave, which will last for some years, the HA has to take proactive measures to curb the brain drain, in particular to retain experienced staff to cope with the increasing service demand in future. We also hope that the new measures can help strengthen the professional development and morale of staff members as well as improve the service quality of public hospitals," the HA Chairman, Mr Henry Fan, said.

"The new arrangement for extending employment takes a forward-looking approach by engaging and communicating with the retiring staff early at the age of 55 to allow sufficient time for their retirement planning. Staff members will be given the flexibility in choosing the time and duration of extending employment up to the age of 65.

"The main targets of the new policy are frontline clinical professionals. Screening procedures will be simplified to assist staff," Mr Fan added.

The HA has estimated that around 1 650 retiring clinical professionals will participate in the programme in the next five years. Supernumerary posts in promotion ranks will be created if needed to avoid promotion blockage for serving staff. This will also augment the manpower to alleviate the work pressure in the front line. Concurrently, the HA has estimated that around 4 000 other support staff members will join the arrangement for extending employment in the coming five years to fill existing vacancies.

Moreover, the new rank of ANC will be created in the nursing grade career structure. Apart from the existing clinical management stream, the ANC rank provides an alternative promotion pathway for nurses aspiring to develop a career in specialty nursing. The new grade structure will also facilitate continuous development in the nursing profession and promote nursing service standards.

The HA will start recruiting over 140 ANCs in early 2022. Qualified nursing staff can apply for the new promotion rank and be promoted progressively along the specialty nursing services pathway to Nurse Consultant or higher positions.

"Human resources are the key in sustaining the development of public

hospital services. The HA will continue to explore and implement other enhanced human resources measures to retain staff and attract more people to join the public hospitals," Mr Fan said.