

Hospital Authority response statement on meeting with Association of Hong Kong Nursing Staff

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

In response to media enquiries on the meeting with representatives of the Association of Hong Kong Nursing Staff (AHKNS) this morning, the spokesperson for the Hospital Authority (HA) made the following reply today (March 14):

The HA has all along been very concerned about the heavy workload that front-line nurses are facing. The HA met with representatives of the AHKNS this morning and explained the measures taken to relieve the workload of front-line nurses. The measures include recruiting more nurses apart from the existing establishment, increasing promotion posting, significantly increasing the training places for sponsored enrolled nurses to undertake registered nurses conversion programmes, employing more part-time nurses in the short term and offering an additional incremental salary point for nurses who have attained the requirements as specialty nurses.

In the year 2018-19, the HA has already recruited over 2 400 nurses, exceeding the original target of 2 230. In addition, the recruitment target of the next year, which is set to be 2 270, is expected to be exceeded. The HA will continue to recruit full-time nurses after replenishing wastage and manpower for new services. Additional manpower will hopefully relieve front-line workload.

Furthermore, the HA will increase promotion posts to retain staff in the year 2019-20. To enhance senior coverage at night, 350 posts of Advance Practice Nurse will be added. Ten positions for Nurse Consultants will also be added. With regard to clerical support, 200 additional ward clerks will be recruited to enhance clerical support and coverage. The HA will continue to employ part-time nurses to alleviate the work pressure of front-line nurses in the interim.

With additional funding support from the Government, the HA will offer an additional incremental salary point to registered nurses who have attained the requirements as specialty nurses to encourage professional development of nursing care, with details to be announced soon.

Regarding the proposal raised by the AHKNS on a salary review of nursing staff such as the enrolled nurse salary and on resumption of a previous pay scale, the HA will cautiously study the impact of the proposal with the Government, in particular the financial feasibility. In addition, the HA will significantly increase the training places by 50 per cent for sponsored enrolled nurses to undertake registered nurses conversion programmes.

Given the diverse views with regard to shift arrangements for nurses, the HA will continue to liaise with them to arrive at a consensus.

The HA expresses gratitude to the AHKNS for its suggestions raised at the meeting and will maintain close communication with nursing staff groups.