

# Hospital Authority Urges Staff to Return to Work

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) today (February 3) urged all healthcare workers participating in industrial action to return to work as soon as possible to avoid further affecting public hospital services and patient treatment.

The HA Chief Executive, Dr Tony Ko, had a meeting with staff members this evening. Dr Ko said, "I hope our colleagues can return to work as soon as possible in the interests of our patients and to avoid overloading the other colleagues stay on duty."

"We share the same objective with our colleagues that the cross-boundary passenger flow should further be reduced to avoid the spreading of the virus. However, we disagree with compromising patient safety when expressing opinions."

The HA Major Incident Control Centre has been closely monitoring the operation of public hospitals today, noting about 2,700 healthcare workers were absent from duty. Although some of the non-emergency services have been reduced in advance, hospital services are still being further affected today.

"While public hospitals have already adjusted service volume earlier to maintain emergency services. For instance, the service quota in General Outpatient Clinics has been reduced by about 25 per cent, while other non-emergency services and Allied Health services have also been reduced by half. Consultation arrangements, treatment procedures and elective surgeries of some patients have also been postponed."

Services that have been affected to a more serious extent include the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, High Dependency Unit, Cardiothoracic Surgery, Isolation Ward and Emergency Medicine Ward in various hospitals. In addition, percutaneous coronary intervention procedures and radiological diagnostic services in some hospitals have also been affected. Many of these services being affected are provided to severely-ill patients.

"If the industrial action continues, public hospitals need to further curtail services, which may eventually affect emergency services and the epidemic prevention work," Dr Ko added.

Dr Ko again thanked the staff who have stayed on duty and being deployed to cope with the extra workload caused by the strike.

The HA welcomes the Government's implementation of more measures to further reduce cross-boundary passenger flow, which shall enhance the

capability of Hong Kong in the combat against the epidemic.

For media enquiries, please contact the News Duty Officer (pager: 7328 3855).