

LCQ21: Participation of public healthcare sector staff in exchange activities on Mainland

Following is a question by the Dr Hon Pierre Chan and a written reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (November 20):

Question:

Regarding the situation of staff members of the Hospital Authority (HA) and the Department of Health (DH) participating in the Course on National Affairs for Hong Kong Professionals (the Course) and other exchange activities on the Mainland, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of invitations received by HA for nominating staff members to participate in the Course, and the number of staff members nominated by HA to participate in the Course, in each year since 2015, with a breakdown by the grade and rank to which they belonged in the following table;

Staff members	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Medical grade					
(i)	Chief of Service				
(ii)	Consultant				
(iii)	Senior Medical Officer/Associate Consultant				
(iv)	Medical Officer/Resident				
Nursing grade					
(i)	Senior Nursing Officer or above				
(ii)	Department Operations Manager				
(iii)	Ward Manager/Nurse Specialist/ Nursing Officer/Advanced Practice Nurse				
(iv)	Registered Nurse				
(v)	Enrolled Nurse				
Allied health professional					
Executive					
Others (please specify)					
Total number of participating staff					

(2) of the amount of expenditure incurred by HA arising from its staff members' participation in the Course, and the total number of days of paid study leave granted by HA to such staff members, in each year since 2015; the number of days such Courses lasted (if the number varied, set out the information by commencement date);

(3) of the year starting from which HA nominated staff members to participate in the Course, and the cumulative number of staff members who have participated in the Course to date; and

(4) of the number of invitations received by DH for nominating staff members to participate in (i) the Course and (ii) other exchange activities on the Mainland, in each year since 2015, and set out the relevant figures respectively according to the formats in (1) to (3)?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Hospital Authority (HA) and the Department of Health (DH), my reply to the various parts of the question raised by the Dr Hon Pierre Chan is as follows:

(1) to (3) The HA all along attaches importance to providing comprehensive training and development opportunities for staff of all grades and ranks. Relevant clinical and non-clinical training as well as exchange activities are arranged from time to time. The HA also accepts invitations and sponsorships from various organisations for staff to attend local or non-local training and academic exchanges, including the Course on National Affairs for Hong Kong Professionals (the Course) organised by the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Arranged by the Chinese Academy of Governance, the Course takes place in Mainland cities for a period of normally six days. The HA is one of the organisations invited to take part in the Course. Staff enrolment is voluntary subject to nomination by respective departments, Hospital Chief Executives and Cluster Chief Executives, and provided that assessment has been made to confirm that the staff's work and the HA's services will not be affected. In the past five years, the HA has, upon invitation, nominated 152 staff members to join ten Courses. Participants included staff from the medical, nursing and allied health professional grades, as well as executive and management staff. The relevant figures are tabulated below:

Grade	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Medical	18	17	9	17	7
Nursing	9	1	3	6	7
Allied health professional	6	0	2	3	3
Executive	8	7	12	7	10

Total number of participating staff	41	25	26	33	27
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Under its human resources policy, the HA may provide support in the form of financial sponsorship and/or study leave, where appropriate, for staff to attend training and development activities. As far as the Course is concerned, the organiser is responsible for meals, accommodation, local transport and the course fee, whereas the HA provides return air passage and study leave for its nominees.

The HA has always attached great importance to providing training and development opportunities for its staff. A variety of clinical, non-clinical and related training programmes as well as exchange opportunities are arranged for staff to broaden their scope of training. In general, apart from offering training opportunities on clinical professional knowledge and skills, the HA also arranges various kinds of training for healthcare professionals, such as training on leadership, management and communication skills. The Course, being a non-clinical training programme, aims to enhance participants' understanding of the Mainland's systems and policies in various aspects, including healthcare system and development.

(4) The DH is committed to providing staff with training and development opportunities by motivating them to participate in various professional training. In addition, the DH will also arrange staff to attend a wide spectrum of training, such as leadership and management, languages and communication skills, etc.

The DH has not received any invitation for nominations regarding the Course since 2015. However, the Civil Service Training and Development Institute (CSTDI) has been inviting government departments regularly to consider nominating officers to attend their national studies courses/thematic study programmes of the Mainland for civil servants. Officers of the DH attend these courses/programmes on a voluntary basis. The nominations must be made by the relevant Heads of Grade. Having assessed and confirmed that the participation will not affect the staff's work and the services provided by the DH, the list of nominations will be passed to CSTDI for selection. In the past five years, the DH, upon invitation, has nominated a total of 80 officers to attend CSTDI's national studies courses/thematic study programmes. Participants included doctors, nurses, para-medical staff, and executive staff. The relevant figures are tabulated below:

Grade	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Doctor	2	3	10	4	8
Nurse	3	2	3	2	2
Para-medical staff	3	1	5	5	4
Executive staff	2	5	0	5	11

Total number of participating staff	10	11	18	16	25
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Regarding the above-mentioned national studies courses/thematic study programmes, while CSTDI provides participants with round-trip passage, board and lodging, local transportation, course fee and study grant, the DH grants study leave to the nominated staff.