

Medical Registration (Amendment) Bill 2021 to be introduced into LegCo

The Government will introduce the Medical Registration (Amendment) Bill 2021 into the Legislative Council (LegCo) to create a new pathway for admission of qualified non-locally trained doctors who are Hong Kong permanent residents to practise in Hong Kong.

A spokesperson for the Food and Health Bureau (FHB) said today (May 18), "There is a severe shortage of doctors in Hong Kong to meet the increasing demand for public healthcare services amidst the ageing population. According to the Healthcare Manpower Projection 2020 conducted by the FHB, the shortage of doctors will not only remain in the years to come but also become more acute with the projected shortfall of doctors reaching 1 610 and 1 949 in 2030 and 2040 respectively. We thus see an imminent case to create a new pathway under the Medical Registration Ordinance for qualified non-locally trained doctors to obtain full registration in Hong Kong as an alternative to the current pathway of passing the Licensing Examination, subject to certain criteria being met."

The Bill stipulates that in order to be eligible for full registration in Hong Kong, a non-locally trained doctor has to fulfil certain criteria, including:

- (a) he/she is a Hong Kong permanent resident;
- (b) he/she holds a recognised medical qualification awarded by a non-local medical school and possesses medical registration in any place where the non-local medical schools concerned are located;
- (c) he/she has been engaged in full-time employment as a medical practitioner with special registration in any of the public healthcare institutions (i.e. the Hospital Authority (HA), the Department of Health and the medical schools of the University of Hong Kong and the Chinese University of Hong Kong) for at least five years after obtaining specialist qualification; and
- (d) he/she is considered by the employing healthcare institutions to have served satisfactorily and competently as a medical practitioner during the period of five years (or more).

Under the new pathway, a Hong Kong permanent resident possessing a recognised medical qualification on the list as well as medical registration in any place where the medical schools awarding recognised medical qualifications are located will be eligible for special registration in Hong Kong, provided that he/she has a full-time job offer as a medical practitioner from any of the public healthcare institutions and he/she is of good character and has good professional conduct. Prior to applying for full registration, a medical practitioner with special registration must have obtained a specialist qualification recognised by the Hong Kong Academy of

Medicine (HKAM) and been subsequently engaged in full-time employment as a medical practitioner with special registration in the public healthcare institutions for at least five years and passed the on-the-job assessment.

For the purpose of determining the list of recognised medical qualifications awarded by non-local medical schools, the Bill also stipulates that a statutory Special Registration Committee (SRC) be established, comprising the Director of Health (DoH) or his/her representative, the Chief Executive of the HA or his/her representative, the Chairman of the Medical Council of Hong Kong (MCHK), the President of the HKAM, the Deans of the two local medical schools, and not more than four other persons to be appointed by the Chief Executive (including three MCHK members and one other person).

The SRC will determine the list of recognised medical qualifications in an objective, independent and transparent manner, taking into account the medium of instruction and the curriculum of the medical programmes concerned, international rankings of the relevant non-local medical schools, and any other aspects deemed appropriate. The list of recognised medical qualifications determined by the SRC will be submitted to the Registrar of Medical Practitioners (i.e. the DoH) direct for promulgation by legal notice to enhance objectivity and transparency and provide more information for parents and students to make informed decisions on their further studies. The list will be reviewed once every three years.

The Bill will be gazetted on Friday (May 21), and will then be introduced into LegCo on June 2.

For details of the Bill, please visit the FHB's website (www.fhb.gov.hk/en/press_and_publications/otherinfo/210500_amendments_mro/index.html).