

Public hospital services affected HA calls on employees to resume duty

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) said that continuing industrial action has seriously affected public hospital services and even some emergency services.

The HA Director (Cluster Services), Dr Deacons Yeung, summed up the impact of industrial action on public hospital services to the media today (February 4) and called on employees to return to work. "Public hospital services rely on the collaboration of healthcare staff of different disciplines, and all are indispensable. I hope that the colleagues on strike will return to work to take care of our patients."

As at 6pm today, a preliminary counting by the HA indicated a total of nearly 5 000 employees were absent from duty, including about 360 doctors, 2 800 nurses and 1 000 allied health professionals.

"Due to the absence of operating theatre healthcare staff, public hospitals can only maintain basic emergency surgery services, while some hospitals even have to postpone cancer surgeries. In the Clinical Oncology Departments, the shortfall in therapeutic radiographers causes delay in commencement of cancer treatment for patients. The shortage of clinical oncology nursing staff has also affected the provision of chemotherapy treatment services."

Other severely affected departments include the Neonatal Intensive Care Units and the Accident and Emergency Departments. A hospital needs to close one of the Emergency Medicine Wards. The more seriously affected clusters include those in the Kowloon Central, Kowloon West and New Territories East Hospital Clusters.

Dr Yeung pointed out that further impact on patient services would depend on the number of employees joining in the industrial action and which departments they belong to. The HA Major Incident Control Centre will continue to closely monitor the situation of the operation of public hospitals.

Dr Yeung appeals to colleagues to return to work as soon as possible to provide services to patients in need and join hands in fighting the epidemic. He also thanked the staff who have stayed on duty and being deployed to cope with the extra workload caused by the strike.