Doctor Reform

We welcome Hospital Authority reviewing the working hours of doctors. In fact over the past few years, the workload of the frontline doctors is escalating and they had to work nearly non-stop during the duty hours and are very stressful..

Indeed, it is the workload, not just the working hours, is the main issues. At the moment most doctors on the front line is working as full capacity. If no additional doctors or extra resources is added to the clinical department, by just shortening the working hours of doctors will inevitably jeopardize the quality of service. Also by squeezing the workload onto the fewer doctors will them more prone to mistakes and more stressful.

One proposal from HA is to set up Emergency Ward to help. However, the doctor and nursing staffing manpower is only 1/3 to 1/2 of the normal medical or surgical ward. With the limited resources, it is hard to believe that it can do the jobs of reducing admission to the clinical ward, reduce night admissions and therefore indirectly help to cut down the working hours of doctors.

In fact the Emergency Department are very busy these days. A lot of patients are attending A&E because of long waiting time for specialty appointment; had medical ailments not completely treated because of shorter length of stay in hospital, and A&E are forced to cut the admission rate. However, resources had not been allocated. During the latest flu outbreaks a number of patient had to wait in A&E for 1-2 days before admission.

We urge HA to sincerely improve the working condition of the front line doctors by not just reducing the work hours; but really put into extra resources so as not to compromise the public service. HA should address the workload issues and more doctors should be recruited to share the work. Without improvement, we can see that the morale of the doctors will continue to dwindle, more experienced doctors will leave the service and the standard of care for patients will be affected.

Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital
Doctors' Association