

**For Information  
on 16 June 2008**

**Legislative Council Panel on Health Services**

**Review on the Mechanism of Appointment of Senior Doctors  
in Hospital Authority**

**PURPOSE**

This paper briefs Members on the objective and progress of the review on the mechanism of appointment of senior doctors in the Hospital Authority (HA).

**BACKGROUND**

2. Since the establishment of HA, the recruitment and appointment of senior doctors have been handled independently by individual hospital clusters and the authority for appointment of senior doctors is with the Hospital Chief Executives (HCEs) of the respective hospitals. This arrangement serves to allow each cluster to have a high degree of flexibility and authority in management of staff.

3. As at 31 March 2008, there were a total of 4 722 doctors appointed in all HA hospitals. Among them, 1 616 were senior doctors in the rank of Consultants and Associate Consultants. The number of senior doctors varies among the hospital clusters, depending on the staff establishment and structure of different specialties, as well as the service demand in the respective cluster.

**EXISTING MECHANISM OF APPOINTING SENIOR DOCTORS**

4. It is the objective of HA “to provide rewarding, fair and challenging employment to all its staff, in an environment conducive to attracting, motivating and retaining well qualified staff”. Pursuant to this

objective, established mechanism and procedures are in place for the appointment of HA staff. For senior doctor positions, when vacancies in such positions arise, the relevant cluster management will first conduct a review to see if there is a need to fill the vacancy, having regard to the service demand and manpower deployment. If the vacancy has to be filled, the hospital concerned will issue a vacancy circular to proceed with the recruitment exercise. All doctors with specialist qualification within HA that are eligible for the appointment may apply for the advertised position.

5. A selection board, normally comprising members from both inside and outside the recruiting hospital/cluster, will then be set up to conduct interview with the applicants with a view to identifying the suitable candidates. After a suitable candidate has been selected, arrangement will be made for him/her to be transferred out from his/her original post and to take up the new position within two to three months.

## **REVIEW ON MECHANISM OF APPOINTING SENIOR DOCTORS**

6. In the selection process, one of the factors for consideration is whether the candidate could readily adapt to the new position and discharge his/her duties effectively and efficiently. It is understandable that candidates serving in the recruiting hospital/cluster are more familiar with the operation and practices of that hospital/cluster. They may have a competitive edge over other candidates and hence stand a higher chance of being selected. There have been comments in this regard, calling for improvements to the selection process. To further enhance the efficiency, fairness and transparency of the process for selection of senior doctors, HA has set up in September 2007 a “Review Group on the Appointment Process for Senior Doctors” (the Review Group) to review existing mechanism of appointing senior doctors and recommend improvement measures in that regard.

7. The Review Group is widely represented with its members comprising the senior management from HA Head Office, Cluster Chief Executives, representatives from the Public Doctors Association, teaching staff of medicine faculty of university as well as an external reviewer. The membership list of the Review Group is at Annex.

## **WORK OF THE REVIEW GROUP**

8. The Review Group has conducted three meetings to date. Members of the Review Group have also met with representatives of HA doctors of different ranks, such as Consultants, Associate Consultants and Residents, to consult their views on the existing mechanism in appointing senior doctors. The Review Group has also made reference to the selection and appointment procedures of senior positions of other public organizations and has, for this purpose, visited the Hong Kong Police Force and the National Health Services of United Kingdom in October 2007 and May 2008 respectively.

9. The Review Group is now consolidating the views and information gathered from the meetings and visits. The Review Group will further discuss and formulate a new appointment mechanism with detailed implementation arrangements for the appointment of senior doctors. The proposal will be put to the management of HA for consideration and consultation with staff in the latter half of 2008.

10. Subject to the views of HA management and staff, HA plans to implement the new appointment mechanism in the first half of 2009.

## **ADVICE SOUGHT**

11. Members are invited to note the content of the paper.

Hospital Authority  
June 2008

**Membership list of the  
Review Group on the Appointment Process for Senior Doctors**

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