



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部食物及衛生局
Food and Health Bureau, Government Secretariat
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

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9 March 2012

Ms Alice LEUNG,
Clerk to Panel,
Panel on Health Services,
Legislative Council,
Legislative Council Complex,
1 Legislative Council Road,
Central, Hong Kong.

Dear Ms LEUNG,

**Panel on Health Services
Meeting on 12 March 2012**

I refer to your letter of 2 March 2012, requesting the Administration to provide the following information -

- (a) from 1988 to 2008 (at four-yearly intervals) and since 2009 (on a yearly basis),
 - (i) the number of neonatal beds of public hospitals and the occupancy rate, with breakdown by special care baby unit and neonatal intensive care unit;
 - (ii) the number of registered obstetricians and gynaecologists in Hong Kong, with breakdown by those serving in public hospitals;
 - (iii) the number of registered midwives in Hong Kong, with breakdown by those serving in public hospitals;
 - (iv) the average weekly work hours of public hospital doctors and nurses in

the Obstetrics and Gynaecology specialty; and

- (b) the justification, with supporting statistics, for the Administration's explanation that the maternity and neonatal services in public hospitals have already reached full capacity.

The information requested and our response is set out below.

The numbers of hospital beds and inpatient occupancy rate in the Neonatology specialty of public hospitals in 1994-95, 1998-99, 2002-03, 2006-07 to 2011-12 are at Annex A. Data prior to 1994-95 is not available.

The numbers of full-time equivalent strength of doctors and nurses in the Obstetrics & Gynaecology specialty of public hospitals in 1998, 2001, 2004, 2008 to 2011 are at Annex B. Data prior to 1998 is not available. Information on professional qualification of doctors and nurses working in the Obstetrics & Gynaecology specialty is not readily available.

The numbers of registered medical practitioners included in the Specialist Register and the breakdown of specialists of Obstetrics & Gynaecology from 1998 to 2011 is at Annex C. As the specialist registration for registered medical practitioners was introduced in 1998, data prior to 1998 is not available. The numbers of registered midwives from 1988 to 2011 are at Annex C.

The average weekly work hours for doctors in the Obstetrics and Gynaecology specialty in public hospitals were 63.9 in September 2006, 59.8 in July to December 2009 and 60.4 in July to December 2010. Information prior to 2006 is not available. For the figure in 2006, it was calculated based on retrospective self-reporting by doctors. For figures in 2009 and onwards, they were calculated based on the work hours of doctors shown in the roster and work hours as reported by the doctors for undertaking duties during off-site on-call period. At present, the average weekly work hours of nurses in the Obstetrics and Gynaecology specialty are 44 hours.

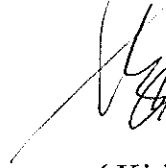
Given the increasing service demand from local and non-local pregnant women in recent years, HA's obstetric and neonatal services are under tremendous pressure and its capacity are fully utilized. To illustrate, the occupancy rate of the neonatal intensive care units in 2011-12 was 108% (up to December 2011) and the utilization rate of HA's delivery capacity in 2011-12 reached 107% (up to December 2011).

HA is also facing the problem of shortage of medical manpower. The supply of local medical graduates decreased from 310 in 2009 to 280 in 2010, and will further decrease to 250 a year in 2011 to 2014. Despite that the number of graduates will increase to 320 by 2015, the medical manpower for all specialties, including

Obstetrics and Gynaecology, will remain stretched in the next few years.

HA will continue to closely monitor the demand of obstetric and neonatal services in public hospitals and ensure that local women will be provided with priority and proper services.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Kirk Yip', written in a cursive style.

(Kirk YIP)

for Secretary for Food and Health

Encl

Annex A

**Number of hospital beds and inpatient occupancy rate
in Neonatology specialty of public hospitals**

Year	Neonatology Specialty					
	Number of Hospital Beds			Inpatient Occupancy Rate (%)		
	Neonatal Intensive Care Unit	Special Care Baby Unit	Overall (Neonatology Specialty)	Neonatal Intensive Care Unit	Special Care Baby Unit	Overall (Neonatology Specialty)
1994-95	63	340	403	93.0	87.7	88.6
1998-99	91	373	464	88.0	76.6	78.8
2002-03	86	367	453	88.6	76.4	78.8
2006-07	85	337	422	86.9	84.4	84.9
2007-08	87	344	431	100.5	93.0	94.6
2008-09	100	349	449	91.1	91.9	91.7
2009-10	100	349	449	84.2	90.7	89.2
2010-11	100	351	451	99.5	95.7	96.5
2011-12 (up to 31 Dec 2011) (Provisional figures)	100	351	451	108.2	96.9	99.5

Notes:

1. Number of hospital beds refers to the position as at 31 March of respective years, except for 2011-12 where the figures refer to the position as at 31 December 2011.
2. Inpatient occupancy rate for 2011-12 refers to the period from April to December 2011 only.

**Strength of doctors and nurses in Obstetrics & Gynaecology specialty
of public hospitals**

	Number of doctors	Number of nurses
March 1998	185	1 041.5
March 2001	186	1 002
March 2004	192	983
March 2008	199	976.2
March 2009	205.9	994.7
March 2010	205.9	993.5
March 2011	204.7	976.3
December 2011	215.4	1 057.4

Note:

Manpower on full-time equivalent basis includes permanent, contract and temporary staff.

Number of registered medical practitioners in the Specialist Register

Year	Number of registered medical practitioners included in the Specialist Register with specialty in Obstetrics & Gynaecology (as at 31 December)	Number of registered medical practitioners included in the Specialist Register (as at 31 December)
1998	247	2 308
2000	271	2 654
2004	305	3 461
2008	348	4 488
2009	359	4 766
2010	367	5 019
2011	367	5 289

Number of registered Midwives

Year	Number of Registered Midwives (as at 31 December)
1988	9 283
1992	10 650
1996	11 675
2000	12 172
2004	4 866
2008	4 756
2009	4 525
2010	4 595
2011	4 655

Note

With the implementation of the practising certificate system on 1 January 2000, letters were sent by the Midwives Council of Hong Kong (the Council) to all registered midwives urging them to apply for the practising certificates. In 2002, the Council subsequently agreed that the names of more than 7 000 registered midwives, who still did not hold a practising certificate, should be removed from the register of midwives in accordance with the Midwives Registration Ordinance.