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30 September 2013

Ms Anita SIT
Clerk to Panel on Public Service
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Ms SIT,

Panel on Public Service
Follow-up to meeting on 15 July 2013

At the Panel meeting on 15 July 2013, the item “conditioned hours of work and leave deduction arrangement for civil servants working 45 hours net per week in the Hospital Authority (HA)” was discussed. While noting that the terms and conditions of civil servants working in HA would not be affected after HA reduced the conditioned work hours of its supporting grades staff with effect from 1 May 2013, Members requested the Administration to follow up with HA on the feasibility of addressing the concern raised by the civil servants working in HA about the different conditioned hours of work between them and the supporting grades staff of HA through special administrative arrangements.

The Administration has been liaising with HA in this regard and the latest progress is reported in the ensuing paragraphs for Members’ information.

Meetings between HA Management and Civil Servants Working in HA

The HA Management is well aware of the concerns of the civil servants working in HA towards the reduced conditioned hours of work of HA's supporting grades staff. The Management has been meeting concerned staff representatives to listen to their views and has assured them that they would not be required to take up additional work as per HA's arrangement. During the meetings, while some staff had expressed worry about the impact of HA's arrangement on their workload, others indicated that they encountered no specific problems. It is worth noting that no single case has so far been established to substantiate any allegation that civil servants working in HA have been subject to assignment of unduly heavy or unjust workload arising from HA's initiative.

Arrangement taken by Individual Clusters

At the Cluster level, HR Heads have been reminded of the sentiment of civil servants working in HA towards HA's initiative. They have been instructed to diligently liaise with line managers, check work schedules, look into issues raised by the civil servants and address staff's concerns, if any. They have also been encouraged to engender a more caring working environment as far as feasible.

Clusters have confirmed with HA Head Office that no additional work has been assigned to civil servants as a result of the reduction in conditioned hours for frontline staff. In fact, HA has recruited additional manpower or redeployed HA employees of the affected grades and ranks to undertake overtime work during the transitional period before the long-term manpower is in place to meet operational needs. Clusters have undertaken to continue to communicate with and explain the situation to the civil servants working in HA. Cluster HR Heads are also actively exploring the feasibility of other measures to facilitate staff friendly work arrangements wherever operation allows.

Continued Communication with Civil Servants Working in HA

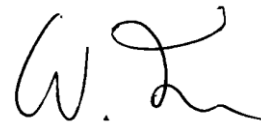
HA will continue to communicate with civil servant staff associations and staff representatives through the established staff consultation machinery as well as ad hoc meetings at both the HA Head Office and Cluster levels.

As for DH, there is a dedicated team responsible for managing major personnel functions in respect of civil servants working in HA. The team holds regular meetings with staff representatives through an established staff consultation mechanism and is accessible to individual civil servants working in HA who wish to raise any issues of concern. Some of the staff representatives have raised general concern about heavier workload for civil servants arising from the reduction of conditioned hours of HA staff, without citing specific cases. DH has duly reflected such concern to HA's senior management and urged HA to follow up as appropriate. DH will continue to closely monitor the matter to ensure that staff concerns are suitably addressed.

Conclusion

HA will continue to monitor the situation closely and ensure that no civil servants working in HA will shoulder additional work as a result of HA's initiative to reduce the conditioned hours of work of its supporting grades staff. Separately, as reported to the Panel, we have embarked upon a review on the conditioned hours of work for Model Scale 1 (MOD 1) grades staff with a view to exploring options for reduction of conditioned hours from 45 hours net to 45 hours gross per week. In the context of that review, DH will also assess the feasibility of reduction of conditioned hours of work of MOD 1 grades civil servants working in HA.

Yours sincerely,



(Miss Winnie Tse)
for Secretary for the Civil Service

c.c. Director of Health
(Attn : Mr David Yuen)

Chief Executive, Hospital Authority