

Our ref: HWF/1/19

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30 March 2007

Ms Mary So
Clerk to Panel
Panel on Health Services
Legislative Council
8 Jackson Road
Central

Dear Ms So,

Medical Frontline Staff in the Hospital Authority (HA)

I refer to item 21 on the list of outstanding items in LC Paper No. CB(2)1238/06-07(01), which is a referral for follow-up by the Panel on the above issue raised by a Member of the Wong Tai Sin District Council at a meeting with Legislative Council Members.

According to information provided by the HA, the total number of healthcare staff of the HA has in fact increased from 28 424 in March 2002 to 28 785 in January 2007. The number of doctors increased by about 13% from 4 105 to 4 637 within the period, and the number of allied health professionals also rose by about 6% from 4 637 to 4 921. While the number of nurses decreased by about 2% from 19 682 to 19 227, the HA has taken positive measures to alleviate the workload of frontline nursing staff. It has been deploying more supporting staff to assist frontline nurses in carrying out simple patient care duties that do not require professional nursing knowledge. Looking ahead into 2007-08, the HA is planning to recruit over 320 medical graduates, 600 nurses and 190 allied health professionals. The new recruits should bring the total number of HA healthcare staff to 28 886, comprising 4 603 doctors, 19 312 nurses and 4 971 allied health professionals.

The HA is committed to maintaining a quality and adequate

workforce for public hospitals and clinics. Apart from conducting an annual exercise to review its manpower needs, the HA has been taking appropriate measures in recruitment, training and staff retention to ensure that public hospitals are appropriately staffed to provide the public with quality medical services.

Yours sincerely,

(Paul Cheng)
for Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food

cc Mr Shane Solomon, Chief Executive of the Hospital Authority