

# Hospital Authority calls on healthcare staff to stay on duty

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) today (February 2) called on healthcare staff to stay on duty and join hands to cope with the challenge of the service surge and the worsening situation of novel coronavirus with increasing number of cases.

Regarding the strikes advocated by some staff members, the HA said that it shared the same goal as its staff to safeguard the health of the people of Hong Kong. It calls on staff members not to join the strike and to seek consensus through discussions. The HA also reiterated that the strike of healthcare staff would not be in the interests of patients and would directly affect public hospital services.

The HA today convened the Central Command Committee to review the services and manpower situation in various hospital clusters. According to the information available at the moment, all hospital clusters need to significantly adjust services to focus their manpower to maintain emergency and essential services, including epidemic control, and other urgent clinical services such as cancer treatment and trauma services.

The HA spokesperson said, "All hospital clusters will reduce elective surgeries and some outpatient services by about 50 per cent. Hospitals will inform patients individually for rescheduling their surgeries. In addition, all specialist outpatient clinic (SOPC) services will be affected to a certain extent. Drug refill services will be arranged for follow-up patients with stable conditions. Hospitals will focus manpower on inpatient services and patients with first SOPC appointments."

"General outpatient clinics will try to maintain all clinics open by rearranging duty rosters and hiring part-time staff. Quotas for patients with episodic illnesses will have to be reduced by 25 per cent. For follow-up appointments of patients with chronic diseases in stable condition, drug refill service will be arranged and consultation will be rescheduled."

The spokesperson said that hospitals would also curtail physiotherapy and occupational therapy outpatient services by about 50 per cent, while maintaining inpatient services with staff on duty. Outpatients will be informed of the rescheduled appointment dates.

The Major Incident Control Centres of HA Head Office and hospital clusters will be activated tomorrow to closely monitor the service situation. If the services are further affected, public announcement will be made in due course.

"The HA needs to provide 24-hour public hospital services to the

community, and will redeploy manpower to maintain services. Also, the HA has established human resources rules guiding applications for leave by staff or unauthorised absence from duty."

The HA once again thanked all staff who remained on duty to cope with the additional duties being deployed to them due to the strike.