Senior doctors, dentists in public sector to get 9% pay rise

SINGAPORE – To better retain healthcare professionals in the public sector, the Ministry of Health (MOH) will be raising the salaries of senior doctors and dentists, as well as providing training courses for healthcare workers.

Announcing this in Parliament yesterday, Senior Minister of State (Health) Amy Khor said the base salaries of senior doctors and dentists in the public sector will increase by 9 per cent next month to keep pace with market trends.

She added that this adjustment would be “over and above” the pay increment implemented in April 2012. At the time, doctors received, on average, a 20 per cent pay hike after the MOH introduced a new salary framework that further took into account doctors’ roles in areas such as education and research.

In response to queries, an MOH spokesperson said about 140 senior dentists and 4,000 senior doctors in the public sector—including consultants, senior consultants and associate consultants—will be eligible for this pay increment.

Although the spokesperson did not address the question regarding the average pay of senior medical professionals, it was reported in 2012 that consultants in the public sector drew a monthly salary of between S$100,000 and S$460,000, depending on their seniority and specialty.

Between 2011 and last year, the healthcare profession grew by 6,000, or 13 per cent.

According to the ministry, a further 20,000 doctors, nurses, pharmacists and allied health professionals will be needed by 2020.

As such, facilitating career progression and increasing recognition and rewards, are due in the second half of this year. Allied health workers and those in intermediate and long-term care settings such as nursing homes will also have more professional upgrading opportunities.

The Singapore Institute of Technology will be introducing degree programmes in diagnostic radiography and radiation therapy later this year, with the subsidy level for courses offered by the Agency for Integrated Care increasing from 80 to 90 per cent, Dr Khor said.

Noting that public healthcare professionals leave for a variety of reasons that can range from long working hours to a desire to start their own practice, she said the ministry cannot fulfil all aspirations, but it “can do more to recognise the important roles that our healthcare professionals play by paying them more competitively... and supporting their professional development”.

As for growing manpower in healthcare, Dr Khor said mid-career professionals have joined the sector, and another 27 former nurses have rejoined the profession after incentives such as refresher courses and training allowances were provided by the ministry.

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