



# Nursing Assistant Support from the Philippines

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Since December 2023, Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital has adopted the Ministry of Labor's "Mid-Level Technical Workforce Program" to increase auxiliary manpower and improve patient care, in line with Tzu Chi's philosophy of charitable education. A total of 17 Filipino graduates from the long-term care specialization program at Tzu Chi University of Science and Technology were recruited in two batches to serve as nursing assistants in the chronic disease wards. In compliance with the regulations of both Taiwan and the Philippines, the hospital's Nursing and Human Resources Departments spent six months preparing for the recruitment of the first group of overseas students with associate degrees as mid-level technical personnel.

As the first batch of nursing assistants had no prior hospital internship experience, we provided them with educational training before they joined their assigned units. The training included basic care techniques and Basic Life Support (BLS). To further support their transition, we implemented a three-track mentoring system involving unit supervisors, Tzu Chi mentors (Yi Dé parents), and school mentors (faculty members). This system helps new staff adapt to both work and life in Taiwan. When facing work-related challenges, they can consult with unit supervisors for clarification and guidance. Yi Dé parents also visit the units to offer emotional support, while school mentors maintain close communication with the unit supervisors, monitoring work performance and offering additional support.

Through cooperation between the hospital and the university, we have discussed internship arrangements for future students. These include opportunities to volunteer during winter and summer breaks and to participate in four-week basic care internships. These measures help familiarize students with hospital routines and improve their readiness for future employment. According to feedback from the second



batch of nursing assistants, these initiatives not only reduced their anxiety about the job but also enhanced their ability to interact with patients' families and adjust to the workplace more effectively.

Although the nursing assistants passed Chinese language proficiency tests during their studies, they still face some communication challenges at work. These include difficulty understanding rapid speech over the phone or interacting with patients who speak Taiwanese or indigenous languages. They are also initially unfamiliar with the hospital's information systems, sometimes resulting in excessive or insufficient clothing requests. However, with the guidance of nurses and senior nursing assistants, along with repeated practice, they are gradually becoming more proficient.

Nursing assistants' work includes auxiliary care and clerical tasks, becoming clinical care partners with nurses. Having received professional care service training,





when nurses teach hired foreign caregivers care skills, they often encounter situations where foreign caregivers don't understand Chinese, at which point they can assist by translating in Filipino and confirming whether the caregiver understands the nurse's instructions. Through joint care by nurses and nursing assistants, patients can also receive better care services.

By hiring foreign nursing assistants through the "Mid-Level Technical Workforce Program", care auxiliary manpower can be supplemented. This program differs from traditional migrant worker introduction methods, with hospitals being direct employers, providing these foreign colleagues with more work and life guarantees and conveniences, such as being able to plan their breaks to meet friends or family working in Taiwan. Moreover, as they receive professional training in Taiwan and become more familiar with local culture and care environment, they provide more care talent in the trend of internationalization and multicultural care.