Secretary for Food and Health visits Hospital Authority innovation labs

The Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, visited innovation laboratories of the Hospital Authority (HA) this afternoon (October 28) to learn more about the latest progress of the HA's work on facilitating biotechnology research and making use of technology to enhance clinical and medical services. She also exchanged views with staff there on their work.

Accompanied by the Chief Executive of the HA, Dr Tony Ko, and the Head of Information Technology and Health Informatics of the HA, Dr N T Cheung, Professor Chan first visited the HA Data Collaboration Lab and the AI Lab to understand the HA's work and plans on healthcare data analysis.

The Chief Executive announced in her 2017 Policy Address that the HA would establish a big data analytics platform to support the formulation of healthcare policies. In order to generate value for healthcare research and stimulate innovative ideas through the platform, the HA Data Collaboration Lab is set up as a new alternative channel for more flexible and interactive data sharing in the HA, and to provide a secured collaboration platform between the HA and researchers for in-depth data analysis within a safe and controlled environment for conducting health data collaboration projects. Since 2019, the HA Data Collaboration Lab has provided data to over 200 researchers in 28 collaboration projects and launched a Self Services Platform to support further exploration and innovation with healthcare data by local researchers.

"The Chief Executive stated in her 2021 Policy Address the plan to vigorously drive the development of life and health technology, and making good use of clinical data is an indispensable part to this end. I am pleased to see that the HA will provide a dedicated structure and do its best to follow the direction set out in the Policy Address to facilitate more institutions to explore the potential use of healthcare data for research and development (R&D) in collaboration with the HA, and make use of the network of HA hospitals for research and clinical trial purposes. The Government will also explore collaboration between the HA and the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation on the use of the HA's clinical data for R&D," Professor Chan said.

Professor Chan and the delegation then visited the IT Innovation Lab to learn more about the HA's achievements in developing smart hospitals.

"Smart Hospital is a key strategy for the sustainable development of hospitals. Healthcare staff can provide high quality services to patients through the assistance of technology such as 5G remote diagnosis and treatment technology, and smart robots. These technologies can also alleviate, in the long run, problems such as the imbalance of manpower supply

and service demands faced by the public healthcare system," Professor Chan stressed.