

Secretary for Health commences visit to Beijing (with photos)

The Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, led a delegation and started a three-day visit to Beijing today (November 6) to meet officials of the National Health Commission (NHC), the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC) and the Chinese Medical Association, and introduced to them the latest developments of various healthcare policies in Hong Kong, with a view to pursuing deeper exchanges with the Mainland in the healthcare aspect and realising the implementation of various initiatives announced in the recent Policy Address in relation to collaboration with the Mainland.

During a morning meeting with the Deputy Director General of the Office of Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan Affairs of the NHC, Mr He Shaohua, Professor Lo introduced the 10 initiatives aiming to enhance the quality of public healthcare services in Hong Kong and transform healthcare innovations into industry development. The 10 initiatives put forward by the Chief Executive as announced in the Policy Address last month include the development of Hong Kong into a health and medical innovation hub, cross-boundary medical collaboration, healthcare manpower, digital healthcare records, oral health, primary healthcare, mental health, Chinese medicine development, enhancement to public healthcare services and combating communicable diseases.

Professor Lo emphasised, "The Health Bureau leads the overall healthcare system of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), formulates policies and allocates resources, with the safeguarding and promotion of public health at the top of its priority list. Hong Kong has all along been keeping its healthcare system abreast of the times through utilisation of technology and pressing ahead with reform and innovation. At the same time, the HKSAR Government will continue to fully leverage the city's medical strength in developing Hong Kong into a health and medical innovation hub and proactively boosting medical innovation and collaboration in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), so as to rally concerted efforts to build a 'Healthy Hong Kong' for integration into the nation's strategic planning of 'Healthy China', thereby making contributions to the development of the GBA and that of the whole nation."

The delegation then proceeded to visit the GACC in the afternoon and met with its CPC Committee Member and Head of Guangdong Sub-Administration, Mr Li Kuiwen. Professor Lo first introduced the recommendation to discuss with other GBA cities on the provision of a cross-boundary ambulance service raised in the Policy Address. He said, "Our goal is to enable direct point-to-point hospital transfers of patients who are in suitable medical condition and with pressing need so as to offer better support to residents in the GBA."

When discussing organ donation, Professor Lo mentioned in particular a

baby girl, Tsz-hei, whose case was the first of receiving a heart donated gratis across the boundary from a brain-dead Mainland child, and also a successful transplant surgery performed at Hong Kong Children's Hospital at the end of last year. He said, "I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the GACC and relevant Mainland authorities again for their strong support and co-ordination in saving a life with collective efforts. The collaboration fully exemplifies the shared principle and mission of the Mainland and Hong Kong in protecting lives, which is of great significance."

Professor Lo and the delegation then met with the President of the Chinese Medical Association, Mr Zhao Yupei, and discussed the professional exchanges among healthcare personnel from the Mainland and Hong Kong. Professor Lo said, "The HKSAR Government is pressing ahead actively with healthcare exchanges and co-operation along various fronts between the Mainland and Hong Kong, with a view to exploring a refined co-ordination mechanism on cross-boundary medical services. The establishment of the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Medical Specialist Training Centre in the University of Hong Kong-Shenzhen Hospital (HKU-SZH) in 2019 by the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine (HKAM), the Shenzhen Municipal Health Commission, the Shenzhen Medical Doctor Association, and the HKU-SZH was the fruitful outcome of seamless co-operation between the two places. Riding on the specialist training model and experience of the HKAM, and taking into account the practical situation on the Mainland, the Training Centre built a standardised specialist training framework which is on par with international practices and recognised by the Mainland. This serves as a pioneer demonstration in fostering the nurturing of medical talent in Shenzhen, the GBA and the nation as a whole."

Professor Lo believes that more in-depth exchanges among healthcare personnel from the Mainland and Hong Kong would set the stage for the steady development of the nation's and the GBA's healthcare sectors under the principles of complementarity and mutual benefits as well as on the premise of benefiting healthcare development on the Mainland and in Hong Kong.

The delegation also visited Beijing Tiantan Hospital affiliated to Capital Medical University this morning to learn about the hospital's latest moves in fostering smart hospital development. Professor Lo shared with healthcare personnel there the details of the HKSAR Government's five-year plan in rolling out eHealth+ which was set out in the Policy Address. The plan will transform the Electronic Health Record Sharing System into a comprehensive healthcare information infrastructure to actualise an effectively connected digital healthcare data network for immediate access and sharing of health records by healthcare service providers in the public and private sectors. The transformation is essential to the facilitation and co-ordination of the delivery of continuous healthcare for individuals and the collection of essential and accurate health surveillance data for effective healthcare policy and services planning for the population as a whole.

The delegation consists of members including the Permanent Secretary for Health, Mr Thomas Chan; the Director of Health, Dr Ronald Lam; the Chairman

of the Hospital Authority (HA), Mr Henry Fan; and the Chief Executive of the HA, Dr Tony Ko. They will continue the second-day visit tomorrow.

