

SCS visits Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (with photos)

The Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Patrick Nip, visited the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) under the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health (DH) today (June 30) to learn more about its important surveillance role in the fight against the COVID-19 epidemic and to give encouragement to colleagues.

Accompanied by the Director of Health, Dr Constance Chan, Mr Nip toured the Specimen Reception area, the Molecular Laboratory and the Special Investigation Laboratory and was briefed on the latest work situations of staff in different positions, especially their work in coping with COVID-19, such as specimen handling and processing, nucleic acid extraction and the use of the self-developed nucleic acid testing method.

Mr Nip said that he was pleased to learn that colleagues of the PHLSB have all along been playing an instrumental role behind the scenes in the fight against COVID-19, from receiving specimens to conducting laboratory diagnoses. PHLSB colleagues provided timely and quality laboratory diagnostic services and assisted the Government in identifying expeditiously infected persons which helped achieve the target of early identification, early isolation and early treatment to prevent the spread of the virus in the community.

From January to June 22 this year, the PHLSB has performed over 188,000 COVID-19 tests in total. The PHLSB has been designated by the World Health Organization (WHO) this year as the WHO COVID-19 Reference Lab and WHO COVID-19 external quality assessment programme provider. The PHLSB also provides a quality assessment programme for local laboratories.

Mr Nip expressed his heartfelt thanks to the DH colleagues for sparing no effort in fighting the epidemic in their various positions during the past few months, noting that they have displayed the professionalism and dedication of civil servants. As the fight against the virus is prolonged, he encouraged colleagues to continue to be dedicated to their duties and stay vigilant so as to safeguard the health of the public.

