

Secretary for Health chairs first meeting of Steering Committee on Health and Medical Innovation Development (with photos)

The Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, chaired the first meeting of the Steering Committee on Health and Medical Innovation Development (Steering Committee) today (January 30) to discuss initiatives for bolstering the development of medical innovation in Hong Kong.

To take forward the recommendation of developing Hong Kong into a health and medical innovation hub as announced in "The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address", the Health Bureau (HHB) has established a high-level Steering Committee, chaired by the Secretary for Health and comprising members from relevant bureaux, departments, institutions, and local medical schools. The Steering Committee is tasked with co-ordinating and advancing the work related to health and medical innovation, and advising the Government on Hong Kong's development in this area.

The work focuses of the Steering Committee include:

- (i) Steering the direction to enhance local infrastructure and systems to enable high-quality development in health and medical innovation;
- (ii) Steering and monitoring the preparation and development of the Hong Kong Centre for Medical Products Regulation, focusing on capacity building and engagement strategy with the Mainland and international regulatory authorities;
- (iii) Steering and monitoring the establishment of the Greater Bay Area (GBA) International Clinical Trial Institute (GBAICTI), focusing on strategies to foster collaboration in clinical trials with the Mainland (especially the GBA) and international stakeholders; and
- (iv) Advising on the strategies to foster closer interface and alignment with health and medical innovation development in the Mainland and other places outside Hong Kong.

Professor Lo said, "Members of the Steering Committee offered invaluable insights at today's meeting to advise on the direction and policy initiatives for driving medical innovation. The HHB will actively follow up with a view to developing Hong Kong into a health and medical innovation hub, which will not only enable patients to benefit from the most advanced diagnostic and treatment technologies but also spurring the growth of new industries in pharmaceutical and medical device research and development (R&D) and testing.

"Hong Kong has high-quality healthcare professions and an efficient

healthcare system. By fully leveraging Hong Kong's medical strengths, promoting health and medical innovation, as well as establishing a registration mechanism of drugs and medical devices based on the 'primary evaluation' approach in the long run, it is expected that more local, Mainland and overseas pharmaceutical and medical device enterprises will be attracted to conduct R&D and clinical trials in Hong Kong. The capacity, recognition and status of Hong Kong's approval mechanism of drugs and medical devices will thus be built up to ensure that the eventual mechanism would be widely recognised internationally and by the Mainland," he stressed.

"Furthermore, health and medical innovation brings the benefits of good drugs and R&D to Hong Kong. To advance the health and medical innovation development, the HHB needs to take a more proactive and efficient attitude towards the reviewing and registering of drugs and medical devices, and to enhance clinical trial development."

To this end, the HHB will establish the GBAICTI in the Hetao Shenzhen-Hong Kong Science and Technology Innovation Co-operation Zone, providing a one-stop clinical trial support platform for medical research institutions and co-ordinating clinical trial resources in Hong Kong's public and private sectors. At the same time, the HHB will also explore co-operation with the clinical trial networks in the Mainland, in particular in the GBA, to co-ordinate clinical trial work between the two places to comply with national and international standards.

The membership of the Steering Committee is as follows:

Chairman

Secretary for Health

Non-official members

Professor Lau Chak-sing

Professor Chiu Wai-yan

Official members

Permanent Secretary for Health

Permanent Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry (or representative)

Director of Health

Commissioner for Innovation and Technology (or representative)

Chief Executive of the Hospital Authority

