

# Secretary for Health leads delegation to Guangzhou and Dongguan (with photos)

â€‹The Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, led a delegation and started a two-day visit to Guangzhou and Dongguan today (March 13) to meet health officials of Guangdong Province and Dongguan city, with a view to deepening exchanges and co-operation between Hong Kong and Mainland cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) on various health-related areas.

The delegation today first met with Deputy Director General of the Health Commission of Guangdong Province (GDHC) Mr Huang Fei to discuss a number of cross-boundary healthcare services, including the Elderly Health Care Voucher Greater Bay Area Pilot Scheme (Pilot Scheme) and a direct cross-boundary ambulance service.

Professor Lo said, "I would like to express my gratitude to the GDHC for its valuable advice in the process of pressing ahead with the Pilot Scheme, ranging from the selection of high-quality medical institutions to relevant Mainland laws and regulations which are conducive to the future monitoring of areas concerning healthcare quality and fee levels.

"The Department of Health (DH) is working with various pilot medical institutions on follow-up arrangements such as reimbursement for claims for Elderly Health Care Vouchers (EHCVs) and system configurations. Last week, the DH conducted training sessions and briefings on the practical operations for staff of pilot medical institutions, and arranged for staff of the University of Hong Kong-Shenzhen Hospital to share their relevant experiences in running the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme, so as to ensure that the future operation of the Pilot Scheme will go on smoothly.

"The GBA development is a national strategy personally devised, planned and driven by President Xi Jinping. In terms of healthcare development, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has all along been reinforcing co-operation with various cities in the GBA in order to optimise the policy initiatives for providing more convenience for Hong Kong citizens under the principles of 'complementarity and mutual benefits' and on the premise that the development of the Mainland healthcare system will be benefited without comprising the development of Hong Kong's local healthcare service," Professor Lo stressed.

As for the provision of a direct cross-boundary ambulance service, Professor Lo said that following the Chief Executive's announcement in the last Policy Address on the discussion with Shenzhen and Macao on the provision of a cross-boundary ambulance service, the Health Bureau has been liaising with the relevant parties of the two places at full steam. The discussions are making good progress. Professor Lo said he hopes that the

direct cross-boundary ambulance service can be launched as soon as possible so as to enable the direct point-to-point hospital transfer of inpatients with appropriate medical conditions.

The delegation then visited the Zhongshan Ophthalmic Center of Sun Yat-sen University and the First Affiliated Hospital of Sun Yat-sen University. Last month, the First Affiliated Hospital of Sun Yat-sen University was included by the Health Bureau as one of the pilot medical institutions under the Pilot Scheme. Hong Kong elderly persons eligible for the EHCV will be able to use the voucher to pay for outpatient healthcare services they received at designated medical centres or medical service departments of the Hospital later this year.

In addition, the Hospital Authority (HA) has earlier commenced discussions with the GDHC on the second batch of the exchange programme for doctors, including an ophthalmology pilot exchange programme under which outstanding ophthalmologists from the Zhongshan Ophthalmology Center of Sun Yat-sen University would come to Hong Kong for exchanges. Two ophthalmologists have already arrived in Hong Kong under the programme and commenced an exchange in March. The HA is actively following up with the GDHC on the exchange arrangements for the other ophthalmologist and doctors of different specialties.

During the meeting with the President of the First Affiliated Hospital of Sun Yat-sen University, Professor Xiao Haipeng, Professor Lo also witnessed the signing of a co-operation agreement between the HA and the First Affiliated Hospital of Sun Yat-sen University on enhancing training and exchanges of healthcare professionals.

Professor Lo is very supportive of the exchange of healthcare talent between the HA and Mainland medical institutions. He said, "The HKSAR Government and the HA have been proactively exploring various collaboration models with relevant bodies to further advance the exchange and co-operation of healthcare professionals in the GBA, with a view to jointly enhancing the professional standards and development of clinical healthcare in the GBA. The HA is taking forward the second batch of exchange programmes with the GDHC. It is expected that over 100 healthcare personnel, covering a wider range of healthcare professions, will come to Hong Kong from various cities in Guangdong Province to participate in the exchange programmes."

The delegation will visit Dongguan tomorrow (March 14) to meet with Dongguan Municipal Government and health officials and visit the Dongguan Tungwah Hospital.

Members of the Hong Kong delegation include the Director of Health, Dr Ronald Lam; the Controller of the Centre for Health Protection of the DH, Dr Edwin Tsui; Deputy Secretary for Health Mr Eddie Lee; the Senior Advisor (Secretary for Health's Office), Dr Joe Fan; the Chairman of the HA, Mr Henry Fan; and the Deputising Chief Executive of the HA, Dr Simon Tang. During the absence of Professor Lo from Hong Kong, the Under Secretary for Health, Dr Libby Lee, is the Acting Secretary for Health.

