

Secretary for Health meets with health officials of Guangdong Province and Shenzhen Municipality on “The Chief Executive’s 2024 Policy Address” (with photo)

The Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, led a delegation to Shenzhen this afternoon (October 18) to meet with Deputy Director-General of the Health Commission of Guangdong Province Mr Deng Linfeng, Deputy Commissioner of the Guangdong Provincial Medical Products Administration Ms Wang Ling and Deputy Director of the Public Hygiene and Health Commission of Shenzhen Municipality Mr Li Chuang, and introduced to them various initiatives on developing Hong Kong into an international health and medical innovation hub, and aspects of deepening medical collaboration in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), as set out in "The Chief Executive's 2024 Policy Address" newly announced.

Professor Lo said, "In the Resolution of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee on Further Deepening Reform Comprehensively to Advance Chinese Modernization adopted by the Third Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee, it mentions the further reform of the medical and healthcare systems and support for the development of innovative drugs and medical devices. The Development Plan for Shenzhen Park of Hetao Shenzhen-Hong Kong Science and Technology Innovation Co-operation Zone (Development Plan for Shenzhen Park) promulgated by the State Council in August last year put forward the synergistic development of Shenzhen and Hong Kong under the 'one zone, two parks' model, expressing clear support for the innovative application of advanced biomedicine technologies by capitalising on the role of the Greater Bay Area International Clinical Trial Centre to accelerate and promote the evaluation, inspection and clinical trials of drugs and medical devices in alignment with international standards.

"The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government is determined to leverage the advantages of 'one country, two systems' and Hong Kong's healthcare professional system to develop Hong Kong into an international health and medical innovation hub to expedite patients' access to advanced diagnostic and treatment services, and promote the development of the biomedicine research and development (R&D) industry, while actively integrating into the national development by showing support for fostering new quality productive forces in biomedical technology, as set out in the Resolution and the Development Plan for Shenzhen Park."

The Chief Executive proposed in the Policy Address directions to complement technological innovation with institutional innovation. The two major policy directions include:

(1) To expedite the reform of the approval mechanism for drugs and medical devices, such as extending the "1+" mechanism to all new drugs and devising the timetable for the Hong Kong Centre for Medical Products Regulation and the roadmap towards adoption of "primary evaluation"; and

(2) To strengthen R&D and translation of biomedical technology. Following the expected commencement of operation of the Greater Bay Area International Clinical Trial Institute in the fourth quarter this year in the Hetao area, Hong Kong will press ahead with collaboration with Shenzhen in establishing the GBA Clinical Trial Collaboration Platform, leveraging the GBA population base of over 86 million under the "one zone, two parks" model in the Hetao Shenzhen-Hong Kong Science and Technology Innovation Co-operation Zone to extend the R&D network, enable cross-boundary use of data, bio-samples as well as drugs and medical devices to shorten the time for clinical trials. At the same time, through the establishment of the Real-World Study and Application Centre, Hong Kong will join efforts with Guangdong Province to promote real-world studies, by integrating with data generated from the use of innovative drugs and medical devices in the GBA under the measure of using Hong Kong-registered drugs and medical devices used in Hong Kong public hospitals in the GBA to expedite applications for registration which enable the drugs and medical devices to be placed in the market of Hong Kong, the Mainland and overseas.

The HKSAR Government will leverage the strengths of mutually beneficial collaborations with the GBA to effectively support innovation and application of advanced biomedical technology, with a view to attracting top-notch global biomedical enterprises and R&D organisations to set up operations in Hong Kong and in the GBA.

During the meeting, various medical collaboration initiatives in the GBA, such as expanding cross-boundary health record sharing, promoting specialist training in the GBA and extending the Elderly Health Care Voucher GBA Pilot Scheme, were also discussed.

Professor Lo emphasised, "The Health Bureau will implement various co-operation initiatives with the Mainland as put forward in the Policy Address and continue to deepen medical and healthcare collaboration with the Mainland, in particular the GBA Mainland cities, with a view to building a 'Healthy Hong Kong' for integration into a 'Healthy Bay Area' and making contributions to a 'Healthy China'."

Members of the delegation include Deputy Secretary for Health Mr Sam Hui; the Deputy Director of Health, Dr Teresa Li; and the Chief Executive of the Hospital Authority, Dr Tony Ko. They will return to Hong Kong tonight.

