

Secretary for Health's delegation continues visit in Switzerland (with photos)

The Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, and his delegation continued with the last day of their visit in Zurich, Switzerland, yesterday (May 30, Zurich time), subsequent to his visit to another multinational pharmaceutical group in Basel, Switzerland, the day before yesterday (May 29, Basel time).

Professor Lo and his delegation paid a courtesy call on the Chinese Consul General in Zurich and for the Principality of Liechtenstein, Ms Chen Yun. Professor Lo introduced to her the latest healthcare developments of Hong Kong, including the vision for driving health and medical innovation.

He said, "The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area has been ushering in immense opportunities for the development of biotechnological healthcare innovations in recent years. The National 14th Five-Year Plan has expressed clear support to develop Hong Kong into an international innovation and technology hub. The Development Plan for Shenzhen Park of Hetao Shenzhen-Hong Kong Science and Technology Innovation Co-operation Zone promulgated by the State Council in August last year also put forward the initiative for synergistic collaboration under the mode of "one zone, two parks" between the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and Shenzhen in developing life science innovation and establishing the Greater Bay Area international clinical trial centre.

"The Chief Executive subsequently announced in the 2023 Policy Address that the HKSAR Government will revamp the prevailing evaluation, approval and registration mechanism for drugs, so as to achieve registration of drugs and medical devices under the 'primary evaluation' approach, with the long-term objective of establishing an internationally recognised regulatory authority for drugs and medical devices. All these aim at accelerating the clinical use of new drugs and medical devices so as to enhance healthcare standards, and spurring the development of industries relating to the research, development and clinical testing of drugs and medical devices. The Health Bureau (HHB) will definitely seize the opportunities to develop HKSAR into an international health and medical innovation hub, and to become integrated into the national development."

The delegation visited the University Hospital Zurich for a meeting with the representatives of its Clinical Trials Center in the afternoon to get a grasp of the Center's latest achievements in medical research and clinical trials, and the development of the network of international clinical trial centres. At the meeting, Professor Lo briefed the attendees on the HKSAR Government's multiple initiatives to push forward the development of clinical trials, particularly the Greater Bay Area International Clinical Trial Institute to be established in the Hetao area by the end of this year, with a

view to co-ordinating and further enhancing the capacity and efficiency of clinical trials in Hong Kong as well as collaborating with the Shenzhen Municipal Government on the construction of a clinical trial network for over 86 million population of the GBA.

He added, "The Hospital Authority (HA) has an extensive, comprehensive, highly integrated and standardised healthcare data system, encompassing medical records of every patient receiving care in the HA. The 'eHealth+' development will further connect and consolidate the medical records of public and private healthcare systems in Hong Kong, with a view to building a comprehensive central health data repository supported by data analytic tools, laying a good foundation for promoting clinical research and studies. In addition, the HA is implementing a series of measures to facilitate the development of clinical research, including streamlining and expediting the process for the ethics review of clinical research, setting up the Central Clinical Research and Innovation Office for one-stop co-ordination of clinical research work conducted in the HA, and setting up a Cluster Clinical Research Support Office in each cluster to provide advisory and support services for frontline staff in aspects such as research study design, data collection and analysis. The aforementioned measures are conducive to Hong Kong in becoming a first-class international clinical research platform."

The delegation members include the Director of Health, Dr Ronald Lam, Deputy Secretary for Health Ms Elaine Mak, as well as officials of the HHB and the Department of Health. Upon conclusion of their visit at night, they left Switzerland and will arrive in Hong Kong later this afternoon (May 31, Hong Kong time).



