

Temporary air-inflated laboratory geared up (with photos/video)

The temporary air-inflated laboratory at Sun Yat Sen Memorial Park Sports Centre is now ready, following some two weeks of preparation, to support large-scale testing under the Government's Universal Community Testing Programme (UCT Programme) to be launched on September 1. For the Mainland nucleic acid test support team (Support Team) which was formed and specifically deployed to Hong Kong by the Central Government to assist the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) in ramping up testing capacity, its members including laboratory testing personnel recognised in the Mainland have familiarised themselves with the local environment and stand ready for supporting the initiative.

To assist Hong Kong to launch a large-scale universal community testing within a short period of time, the Support Team had earlier assisted in the preparatory work for the temporary laboratory with a view to substantially ramping up the virus testing capacity of Hong Kong. The Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Health), Mr Thomas Chan, who led the work group on testing of the HKSAR (work group), along with leader of the Support Team, Mr Yu Dewen, as well as members of the work group and the Support Team today (August 26) visited the Sun Yat Sen Memorial Park Sports Centre to inspect the preparation of the temporary air-inflated laboratory and testing procedures. Sunrise Diagnostic Centre Limited, a joint venture with BGI set up in Hong Kong, is responsible for supporting the Support Team in the set up and operation of the temporary air-inflated laboratory. During the visit, representatives of Sunrise Diagnostic Centre had explained in detail various aspects of the preparatory work and operational flow of the temporary air-inflated laboratory.

Mr Chan said that the HKSAR Government expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Central Government for its support to enhance the testing capacity in Hong Kong, which had laid a solid foundation for the UCT Programme. After the inspection, the work group and the Support Team considered that the preparation of the temporary air-inflated laboratory is progressing well and expressed confidence in the smooth operation of the laboratory when the UCT Programme is launched. The Government will endeavour to protect public health and ensure the UCT Programme be implemented in a safe and orderly manner to provide voluntary virus tests for all citizens. He appeals to members of the public to actively participate in the UCT Programme to fight the epidemic together, and to contribute to the eradication and control of epidemic in Hong Kong, paving way for gradual relaxation of social distancing measures and return to normal life.

The Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) of the Department of Health (DH) 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. The temporary air-inflated laboratory had passed the DH's assessment under the external quality assessment programme and complied with the requirements to provide COVID-19 tests for the Government. The laboratory also meets the requirements of a Biosafety Level 2 laboratory, and has implemented relevant infection control measures to ensure hygiene and appropriate waste management without emission of harmful gas.

