

US for Health attends medical conference and visits primary healthcare organisations in New Zealand (with photos)

The Under Secretary for Health, Dr Libby Lee, enlightened participants of the annual Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators (RACMA) Conference in Auckland, New Zealand today (October 13, Auckland time) about the progress of Hong Kong's efforts in reforming the primary healthcare system. During her stay in Auckland, she also visited several primary healthcare organisations to learn from their experiences on providing primary healthcare services through collaboration of government and non-profit organisations.

Dr Lee visited Auckland mainly to attend the annual conference organised by the RACMA from October 11 to 13 with the Commissioner for Primary Healthcare, Dr Pang Fei-chau, and Assistant Commissioner for Primary Healthcare Dr Tony Ha. At a conference session today, Dr Lee gave a presentation on the primary healthcare service reform led by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government. She introduced the various measures rolled out since the release of the Primary Healthcare Blueprint last December, including the establishment of a primary healthcare system at the district level, promotion of the family doctor concept and the mindset of early management of health and chronic diseases among citizens, as well as the enhancement to the Electronic Health Record Sharing System.

Joined by the two commissioners, Dr Lee also visited in Auckland a Primary Health Organisation (PHO) and two general practice clinics to gain a better understanding of their approach of engaging non-profit organisations and private healthcare organisations in co-ordinating or providing primary healthcare services under government subsidy. They met with representatives from the Health New Zealand (Health NZ), the Auckland PHO, the East Health Trust PHO and ProCare, which is a leading healthcare provider, to have in-depth exchanges. In addition, the party toured teaching clinics of the University of Auckland to explore New Zealand's work in nurturing primary healthcare talent.

Dr Lee stated that the New Zealand Government set up the Health NZ last year. One of the functions of the Health NZ is to consolidate primary and community care with PHOs under its purview. PHOs in various districts of New Zealand are funded by the government to bring together general practitioners, nurses and other healthcare professionals in the community to ensure a seamless continuum of care and, in particular, better management of chronic conditions. This model is akin to the mode of operation of the Primary Healthcare Commission in planning and the upcoming Chronic Disease Co-Care Pilot Scheme in Hong Kong. The visits provided a chance for a comprehensive

understanding of New Zealand's experiences which are valuable to Hong Kong in accomplishing the city's primary healthcare development in a refined manner.

Upon the end of the conference today, Dr Lee and the two commissioners will return to Hong Kong tomorrow (October 14).

