

## Health first for people and the environment

Civil Service Newsletter Editorial Board

■ ONE of the most important individual roles for the duration of the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Events (the Events) falls on the shoulders of the Director of Health, Dr Lam Ping-yan, who has been appointed Chief Medical Manager of the Events.

Dr Lam is responsible for overseeing medical services for the Events, comprising public health programmes, medical treatment and emergencies, and public health emergency preparedness, to be delivered by a multi-agency team from the Department of Health (DH), Hospital Authority, Fire Services Department, Hong Kong St John Ambulance, and the Auxiliary Medical Services.

He reports to the Chief Medical Officer in Beijing and maintains close liaison with the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad on public health emergency and medical incidents relating to the Events on a real-time basis.

To strengthen the overall preparedness and response of the Government to public health incidents relating to the Events, DH organised a multi-agency exercise code-named "Equator" on June 6, 2008. The objective of the exercise is to validate the interdepartmental procedures and government contingency plans on an infectious disease outbreak during the events period and to enhance interdepartmental co-ordination and response. Over 100 participants from five government departments, the Hospital Authority, the Equestrian Events (Hong Kong) of the Games of the XXIX Olympiad Company Limited (Equestrian Company) and the hotel designated as Hong Kong Olympic Village took part in the exercise.

The Exercise Equator simulated a food poisoning outbreak affecting 24 athletes in the Olympic Village. Some patients were taken to the Prince of Wales Hospital (PWH) for further medical treatment while others received medical attention inside the Olympic Village. Staff of DH carried out epidemiological investigation and worked with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department on food and hygiene inspections in the village.

Dr Lam together with the Secretary for Food and Health, Dr York Chow Yat-nok, visited the Olympic Village and PWH



Dr Chow (second right) and Dr Lam (left) visiting Prince of Wales Hospital on the exercise day.

on the exercise day to observe the frontline operation of the exercise. Their presence was a confidence booster for frontline staff members, who are ready to take on any public health challenges during the events period.

### Getting into the 'green' spirit

Other departments too have been hard at work preparing for the Events, taking on the challenge of "greening" Hong Kong in the spirit of the Green Olympics. The Government has been carrying out beautifying and greening works in 47 areas, including Victoria Park, Tunnel Approach Rest Garden, Statue Square, Chater Garden, Harcourt Garden, Hong Kong Cultural Centre Piazzas, the gardens in Yuen Wo Road in Sha Tin and the public transport exchange in Sheung Shui.

The Home Affairs Department organised Hong Kong Tree Planting Day 2008 at the end of March, with more than 3,000 participants planting 10,000 trees in Pak Mong Village, Lantau Island. The plantation area has been named Olympic Green.

The Equestrian Company has also shown its "green" credentials, using green materials and re-usable energy during the Events. It has also focused on air quality control and waste management.



Tree Planting Day 2008.