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Press Release

For Immediate Release

HKSTP and HKU Collaborate to Establish State-of-the-Art PIC/S GMP Facility for Advanced Cell Therapies

- HKSTP and HKUMed unveil the HKUMed Laboratory of Cellular Therapeutics, a leading-edge GMP laboratory to safeguard public health and facilitate the development of advanced therapy products.
- The GMP facility will be pivotal in readying promising research by local universities and biotech companies for translation into clinical applications.
- HKSTP is committed to cementing Hong Kong's position as Asia's leader in biomedical technology with critical infrastructure, international recognition, substantial investment and strategic partnerships.

(Hong Kong, 23 May 2023) – The Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTP) and the LKS Faculty of Medicine, the University of Hong Kong (HKUMed) today announced the launch of HKU-HKSTP Collaborative Programme and the opening of HKUMed Laboratory of Cellular Therapeutics, a leading-edge GMP laboratory to safeguard public health and facilitate the development of advanced therapy products (ATPs). This milestone enables new lines of research and production of ATPs, including stem cell therapy for cardiac diseases and CAR-T cell therapy for blood cancers led by Professor Tse Hung-fat and Professor Eric Tse Wai-choi, respectively. The products manufactured would benefit new patient groups with a broad indication, and to boost development of innovative therapy with more clinical experience acquired.

The HKUMed GMP Lab aims to manufacture clinical-grade ATPs as investigational medicinal products (IMP) for clinical trials and to provide a brand-new unique training platform for scientists and clinicians. This is Hong Kong's first GMP multi-products facility with approval in principle from the HKSAR Department of Health for an ATP manufacturing license. The facility will also serve as a Pharmaceutical Inspection Convention and Pharmaceutical Inspection Co-operation Scheme (PIC/S) GMP-compliant training centre for key personnel involved in ATPs manufacturing, quality control and assurance.

Talent training and international collaboration are keys to establish a hub for ATPs development in Hong Kong. The HKUMed GMP Lab's joint training programme with the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service (SNBTs) and University College London (UCL) has produced a group of competent staff to operate the facility. HKU is also developing ATP translational training at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in collaboration with international partners from UCL and Cell Therapies Pty Ltd in Melbourne. The launch of the HKUMed GMP Lab offers unparalleled learning opportunities in developing gene and cell therapies, as well as serving as a stepping stone in transforming HKUMed's research discoveries into real products.

In terms of commercialisation of local research breakthroughs, the HKUMed GMP Lab will collaborate with biotechnology companies on GMP projects and pilot trials. Clinical trials on CAR-T and stem cell therapies are targeted to be available in five years, which aim at benefiting non-cancer patients as well. To pave way for commencing product development in the upcoming Jockey Club Centre for Clinical Innovation and Discovery at Grantham Hospital, equipped with GMP laboratory for gene and



cell therapy in tenfold scale, the HKUMed GMP Lab will collaborate with pharmaceutical companies in the localised manufacturing of cellular products for such as CAR-T therapies.

Dr Grace Lau, Head of Institute for Translational Research, HKSTP said, “The GMP facility will be pivotal in readying promising research by local universities and biotech companies for translation into clinical applications. HKSTP is committed to cementing Hong Kong's position as Asia's leader in biomedical technology. This includes providing critical infrastructure and gaining international recognition to attract investment and forge strategic partnerships. The HKU-HKSTP Collaborative Programme will further strengthen Hong Kong's ATPs ecosystem and substantially enhance the city's competitiveness in the global market for research and commercialising next-generation cell and gene therapies.”

“We believe HKU is consolidating top industry talents to establish its leading role as an ATP training hub in Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area,” said Professor Tse Hung-fat, academic lead of the HKUMed Laboratory of Cellular Therapeutics.

Professor Tse remarked, “I wish to express our sincere gratitude to our funding bodies, the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation, The Queen Mary Hospital Charitable Trust, the Innovation and Technology Commission, Ng Teng Fong Charitable Foundation, and Ms Amy Yeung Bick-ye. Last but not least, our training providers, Professor Marc Turner from SNBTs, Professor Ian Wong of HKUMed and Dr Dominic Wall from Cell Therapies Pty Ltd.”



Photo 1: HKUMed and HKSTP collaborate to establish a leading-edge PIC/S GMP facility for advanced cell therapies.



Photo 2: Professor Chak-sing Lau, Dean of Medicine of HKU, remarked that the Lab is Hong Kong's first GMP multi-products facility with approval in principle from the Department of Health for an ATP manufacturing license.



Photo 3: Mr Albert Wong, CEO of HKSTP said that the partnership with HKU to open a world-class facility will revolutionise the development of advanced cell therapies.



Photo 4: HKUMed Laboratory of Cellular Therapeutics celebrates official opening today.



Photo 5: Clinical trials on CAR-T and stem cell therapies are targeted to be available in five years, which aim at benefiting non-cancer patients as well.



Photo 6: A Press Conference was held following the Opening Ceremony of HKUMed Laboratory of Cellular Therapeutics, chaired by (from left) Dr Grace Lau, Head of Institute for Translational Research, HKSTP; Professor Tse Hung-fat, Chair of Cardiovascular Medicine; Chairperson, Department of Medicine, School of Clinical Medicine, HKUMed, and Professor Eric Tse Wai-choi, Clinical Professor, Department of Medicine, School of Clinical Medicine, HKUMed.

Photos Lab 1-6: Overview of the leading-edge GMP laboratory.

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About Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation

Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTP) has for over 20 years committed to building up Hong Kong as an international innovation and technology hub to propel success for local and global pioneers today and tomorrow. HKSTP has established a thriving I&T ecosystem that is home to two unicorns and Hong Kong's leading R&D hub with over 13,000 research professionals and over 1,300 technology companies focused on healthtech, AI and robotics, fintech and smart city technologies.

Established in 2001, we attract and nurture talent, accelerate and commercialise innovation and technology for entrepreneurs on their journey of growth in Hong Kong, to the Greater Bay Area, Asia and beyond. Our growing innovation ecosystem is built around our key locations of Hong Kong Science Park in Shatin, InnoCentre in Kowloon Tong and three modern INNOPARKS in Tai Po, Tseung Kwan O and Yuen Long. The three INNOPARKS are realising a vision of new industrialisation for Hong Kong. The goal is sectors like advanced manufacturing, electronics and biotechnology are being reimaged for a new generation of industry.

Through our infrastructure, services, expertise and network of partnerships, HKSTP will help establish innovation and technology as a pillar of growth for Hong Kong, while reinforcing Hong Kong's international I&T hub status as a launchpad for global growth at the heart of the GBA innovation powerhouse.

More information about HKSTP is available at www.hkstp.org.

About LKS Faculty of Medicine, the University of Hong Kong (HKUMed)

HKUMed is the oldest local institution of higher education in Hong Kong. It was founded as the Hong Kong College of Medicine for Chinese in 1887, was renamed the Hong Kong College of Medicine in 1907 and became the premier founding Faculty when the University was established in 1911. From its modest beginnings, the Faculty has grown to become the largest faculty of the University. The Faculty is comprised of 16 departments and units, School of Biomedical Sciences, School of Chinese Medicine, School of Clinical Medicine, School of Nursing, School of Public Health and a number of strategic centres of research excellence. For more information about LKS Faculty of Medicine, please visit www.med.hku.hk.

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