

First international-standard blood bank opens in HCMC

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The Hematology and Blood Transfusion Hospital in Ho Chi Minh City inaugurated its first international-standard blood bank on February 2.

The HCM City blood bank, the largest of its kind in Vietnam, can process and store up to 300,000 units of blood per year. The 4,200-square-meter, 6-storey building is worth US\$4.6 million, funded by the State budget.

It boasts a system to preserve frozen units of rare blood types for up to several years and has labs for the study of immunology, hematology, genetics, and blood analysis.

Equipped with state-of-the-art equipment worth VND65 billion, the blood bank can also process and preserve tissue from up to 10,000 umbilical cords for stem-cell research and other uses.

The city's Deputy Chairman Hua Ngoc Thuan attended the inauguration ceremony.

Nguyen Thi Hue, the president of the HCMC chapter of the Vietnamese Red Cross (VNRC) and Dr. Nguyen Anh Tri, director of the Institute of Hematology and Blood Transfusion, said that two campaigns encouraging people to donate blood before the Tet (lunar New Year) holiday, will launch in the coming days.

Organizers expect to receive some 2,000 units of blood from the first campaign set to run February 3-7 at the HCMC Youth Culture House in District 1; and 1,500 units from the second campaign set to run in Hanoi on February 5.

In related news, the HCM City-based Tropical Diseases Hospital has spent more than VND34.5 billion (\$1.8 million) on a 100-bed center to treat HIV/AIDS patients and a ward to treat those with other infections.

The new facility marks an important achievement in HCM City's efforts to improve healthcare and fight infectious diseases.

(Source: SGGP)