

Centralised Organ Donation Register celebrates 10th anniversary

The Food and Health Bureau, the Department of Health (DH) and Radio 1 of Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) today (November 10) celebrated Organ Donation Day 2018 and the 10th anniversary of the launch of the Centralised Organ Donation Register (CODR) (www.codr.gov.hk) at a ceremony.

The Government has designated the second Saturday of November every year as Organ Donation Day. This year's theme is "Respect your loved ones' wishes and support organ donation".

Speaking at the ceremony, the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, said, "There are more than 2 000 patients waiting for organ transplants in Hong Kong every day. However, among the more than 100 brain stem dead patients who are eligible as organ donors every year, only 40 to 50 per cent of their families give consent for organ donation. According to a Thematic Household Survey conducted by the Census and Statistics Department, among those aged 18 to 64 who had expressed their opinions on organ donation, 38.1 per cent thought that family members can dismiss a family member's wish to donate organs irrespective of the deceased's indication to do so after death.

"We urge everyone to be more receptive to organ donation and respect their family member's wish to donate organs, as the act not only helps patients in need but also indirectly helps their families."

Professor Chan also reminded the public to share their wish to donate organs after death with their families upon registration, as well as encourage their family members to register in the CODR.

"The Organ Donation Promotion Charter established in end 2016 is part of the Government's continuous efforts in promoting organ donation to help end-stage organ failure patients. So far, more than 570 companies, organisations and schools have signed the Charter and pledged to promote the culture of organ donation internally and in the community. We will continue to co-operate with various community organisations to conduct public education and urge all sectors to be creative in promoting organ donation," Professor Chan added.

Also attending the ceremony, the Director of Health, Dr Constance Chan, said that the DH has been promoting organ donation to the public since 1978 and established the CODR in 2008 to make it more convenient for prospective donors to voluntarily register their wish to donate organs after death. The CODR records the wishes of prospective donors properly and provides a reliable and efficient way for the Hospital Authority (HA)'s Organ Donation Co-ordinators to know a patient's wish to donate organs after his or her death. The Organ Donation Co-ordinators can contact the bereaved family as soon as possible to obtain their consent on organ donation and help patients

waiting for organ transplants.

"As the CODR celebrates its 10th anniversary, the number of registrations has now exceeded 293 000. In other words, about four to five out of 100 adults in Hong Kong have registered in the CODR. On the other hand, according to the Census and Statistics Department's survey, 32.5 per cent people aged 18 to 64 are willing to donate organs after death, which showed that the majority of persons who are willing to donate organs after death have not yet registered in the CODR. We will continue our efforts to promote the culture of organ donation, so as to eliminate individuals' and families' resistance to and reservations over organ donation," Dr Chan said.

Dr Chan added that the DH has been trying to make it easier for people to register in the CODR in the past few years through means such as enhancing the webpage design. A sharing function has been added so that people can share their wish to support organ donation with their relatives and friends through social media.

Acting Deputy Director of Broadcasting (Programmes) Ms Kirindi Chan said at the ceremony, "Radio 1 of RTHK, through the programme 'Healthpedia', has been actively collaborating with the Government, the HA and voluntary organisations to promote the importance of organ donation to the public as well as encourage them to register in the CODR and make an important step forward in saving lives and families."

At the ceremony, artiste Julian Cheung and athlete Stephanie Au were appointed as Organ Donation Promotion Ambassadors who will assist in spreading the message of supporting organ donation to every corner of society. Twenty-seven organisations, enterprises and schools which have signed the Organ Donation Promotion Charter and four supporting organisations were given certificates of commendation at the ceremony in recognition of their efforts in promoting organ donation in the past years.

Since 2016, the Government has designated the second Saturday of November every year as Organ Donation Day and the anniversary of the launch of the CODR. To tie in with the celebration, the DH's organ donation promotion vehicle is visiting the 18 districts across the territory this month to promote organ donation to the public. Twenty-five District Council members will support the event by jointly encouraging members of the public to register in the CODR and share their wish with their families.

For more information on organ donation and its promotion activities, the public may visit the DH's thematic website (www.organdonation.gov.hk). They are also invited to "like" and follow the DH's Organ Donation@HK Facebook page (www.fb.com/organdonationhkeng) for the latest information.