

DH steps up organ donation registration promotion in 18 districts

The Department of Health (DH) today (June 15) appealed to members of the public to actively support organ donations. The DH has been committed to promoting registration for organ donations and will further strengthen its efforts by setting up promotion booths in 18 districts during the two weeks following next Monday (June 19). Members of the public can obtain information about organ donations and register in the Centralised Organ Donation Register (CODR) on-site.

From June 19 to 30, the DH will set up 18 organ donation promotion booths at various District Health Centres, community halls and Home Affairs Enquiry Centres, etc. The public can register their wish to donate organs at the booths so as to bring hope to patients awaiting organ transplants and their families. For details of the promotion booths, please visit: www.organdonation.gov.hk/en/promotional_activities.html.

The CODR, set up by the DH in 2008, aims to facilitate voluntary registration of prospective donors and to record their wish to donate organs reliably and securely. The CODR enables healthcare personnel responsible for organ donations to know about the wish of the deceased to donate their organs, and the bereaved families to acknowledge and honour such wishes to rekindle the lives of others.

A spokesman for the DH said that there are currently over 2 000 patients in Hong Kong with organ failures in imminent need of organ transplants. Without matched organs, these patients have to depend heavily on devices and drugs to sustain their lives. Many of them have lost their lives before the right organ match became available. To shorten the waiting time of patients and give them a new lease of life in time, active support for organ donations by the public is exceptionally important.

Hong Kong has been adopting an "opt-in" system for cadaveric organ donations, under which even if a deceased person has registered in the CODR, organ donation co-ordinators would seek the consent of the deceased's family members. Should there be any objection from the deceased's family members, the relevant transplant operation will not be performed. In this regard, the CODR is an effective way for donors to clearly express to their families and healthcare personnel their wish to donate organs after death. Moreover, it is also vital that donors speak to their family members about their organ donation wish. Experience demonstrates that when the bereaved are apprised of their loved ones' expressed wish to donate organs before their death, family members are likely to be inclined to respect and fulfil the wish. By sharing the decision with their family members, donors can ensure that their spirit of benevolence will be realised after their passing.

The DH is calling on members of the public to actively support organ donations and garner support from their families and friends for this

benevolent act to rekindle the lives of others, and help spread the message to every corner of society.

In addition to registering at the promotion booths, the public can also register at the CODR website (www.codr.gov.hk) or submit completed registration forms to the CODR Office by post or by fax. For more information about organ donations, please visit the thematic website at: www.organdonation.gov.hk or the "Organ Donation at HK" Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/organdonationhk.