

Secretary for Health attends Forum on Organ Transplant and Bionic Medicine in Beijing (with photo)

The Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, attended the 2024 Hepatobiliary Surgery Academic Conference cum Forum on Organ Transplant and Bionic Medicine of the Chinese Medical Doctor Association in Beijing today (November 9) to exchange views with experts on the latest developments in organ transplantation in the country as well as overseas and explore the strengthening of co-operation between the Mainland and Hong Kong in areas related to organ donation and transplantation.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the Forum this morning, Professor Lo introduced the recent developments in organ donation and transplantation in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). He said, "The HKSAR Government has been stepping up promotion on the spirit of altruism and selfless love demonstrated in organ donation. Since 2016, the second Saturday of every November has been designated as Organ Donation Day, which exactly falls on today. The designation of Organ Donation Day aims at nurturing and promoting a culture that embraces organ donation and encourages members of the public to show support by action for organ donation, thereby rekindling hope for patients awaiting organ transplants to live a new life. As of September this year, the number of registrations in the Centralised Organ Donation Register of the HKSAR has reached an all-time high of over 380 000."

He mentioned that the unprecedented cross-boundary organ donation case by the HKSAR and the Mainland in December 2022 was accomplished with resounding success for Tsz-hei, a then 4-month-old baby girl who had undergone a successful heart transplant. He said, "The success of the first cross-boundary organ donation case not only exemplifies to the fullest the inseparable ties between the Mainland and Hong Kong as well as our shared principle and mission in protecting and saving lives, but also increases the chances of successful organ matches for patients awaiting organ transplants. Riding on this successful experience, the Health Bureau and the Hospital Authority are strenuously working with relevant Mainland authorities to regularise the mechanism for handling emergency organ transplant requests."

He continued, "As stated in the Resolution of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee on Further Deepening Reform Comprehensively to Advance Chinese Modernization adopted by the Third Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee, the country will further reform the medical and healthcare systems and implement a health-first strategy. Organ transplantation is a matter of concern to the life and health of citizens, and also a significant indicator of the national medical development and advancement of civilised society. The organ donation and transplantation system established by our country comprises five major work systems in organ donation, acquisition and allocation, clinical transplantation services,

quality control as well as regulation, thus setting out a work structure in human organ donation and transplantation that is impartial in science, and can safeguard fairness with adherence to ethics and in line with China's national circumstances and culture. Our country's organ donation and transplantation work has achieved rapid development progress, being ranked second worldwide in the number of organ donations and transplantations and is among the top level of organ transplantation technology internationally."

Under the Belt and Road Life and Health Technology In-depth Cooperation Project Agreement, the Institute of Organ Transplantation and Bionic Medicine of Tsinghua University and the Hong Kong Scientist Association (HKSA) joined forces as strategic partners. Among their collaboration projects is the establishment of the Belt and Road international innovation and technology center in Hong Kong, including the setting-up of the International Organ Transplantation Innovation Center.

Professor Lo added, "I anticipate that the Institute and the HKSA will actively look into the key core issues of organ donation and transplantation in accordance with the principles of complementarity and mutual benefits, thereby contributing to the national efforts in organ donation and transplantation."

Professor Lo will return to Hong Kong tonight. During his absence, the Under Secretary for Health, Dr Libby Lee, is the Acting Secretary for Health.

