

For discussion on  
8 February 2010

## Legislative Council Panel on Health Services Organ Donation Campaign

### Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the progress of the campaign to promote organ donation.

### Current Situation of Organ Donation

2. End-stage organ failure often results from many common chronic diseases in Hong Kong when the conditions of the patients become more serious. For these patients, apart from certain life-sustaining treatments, organ transplant is often the only means to sustain life. Cadaveric organs are the main source of organs for transplant. There are also individual cases of close relatives offering living organs for transplant.

3. It is encouraging to note that the number of cadaveric organs donated for transplant increased significantly in 2009. The number of donated cadaveric kidneys and livers surged from 91 in 2008 to 130 in 2009, representing an increase of over 40%. The number of organ/tissue donations in hospitals under the Hospital Authority (HA), and the number of patients waiting for transplant are at **Annex**.

4. Nevertheless, according to the information provided by HA, among the families of the deceased approached by the Transplant Coordinators of HA in 2009, about half still refused to donate the organs of the deceased. About one-third of refusal cases is due to uncertainty about the wish of the deceased, including the failure to find out the organ donation cards that the deceased had signed.

5. In terms of overall strategic consideration, the most effective way to boost the number of organ donations and help more patients in need of organ transplant is to attract more people to donate organs after death and agree to the donation of organs of their deceased family members. Hence, the Administration's main strategy on organ donation continues to be the promotion of the message and culture of organ donation so that more people are willing to donate organs and accept the concept of organ donation. Apart from enlisting more public support for organ donation, the key is to encourage prospective donors to register their wish to donate organs on the Centralised Organ Donation Register (CODR) and make known their wish to their families.

## **Centralised Organ Donation Register**

6. The CODR was launched on 24 November 2008 to provide multiple channels (including internet, email or fax) for the public to register their wish to donate organs after death more conveniently. It also enables their wish to be readily accessible to Transplant Coordinators at the critical moment so that the latter can approach the family members as soon as possible to seek consent to carry out relevant examinations and operations in order to save patients in urgent need of organ donation. Since the launch of the CODR, as at 8 January 2010, there have been about 40 000 new registrants for organ donation. Furthermore, the Hong Kong Medical Association (HKMA) has also helped to seek consent of the registrants of its Organ Donation Register to transfer their data to the CODR. As at 8 January 2010, the data of about 5 000 registrants has been transferred from HKMA's Organ Donation Register to the CODR to bring the total number of registrants on the CODR to about 45 000. The Department of Health (DH) and HA will, in coordination with the relevant healthcare professional bodies and non-government organisations (NGOs), continue to encourage the public to register with the CODR. One of the important messages is to make known their wish to their family members. Apart from registering with the CODR, members of the public can continue to express their wish to donate organs by signing and carrying organ donation cards.

## **Progress of the Campaign to Promote Organ Donation**

7. The public's favourite response to registering with the CODR last year demonstrates a growing acceptance of organ donation. DH and HA will, in collaboration with the relevant healthcare professional bodies, NGOs, 18 District Councils as well as the platform of Healthy Cities, continue to promote organ donation in order to further enhance public awareness, encourage them to express their wish to donate organs after death through the CODR, and remind them to make known and make clear their wish to their family members. Our short-term goal is to lessen reluctance or hesitation of individuals and family members regarding organ donation. The ultimate goal is to create an atmosphere in society which recognises voluntary organ donation as a commendable act of charity and something that is the norm rather than the exception.

8. To this end, DH in collaboration with HA and the relevant NGOs have rolled out a series of organ donation promotional activities at the community level. The main strategy for the promotion campaign is to instil actions in the community through engaging community leaders and different sectors of society so as to garner their support and through them reach out to all sectors of the community. These activities include –

- (a) appealing to community leaders (including government officials, Members of the Executive Council, Legislative Council and District Councils) to register with the CODR (the Chief Executive, Chief Secretary for Administration, Financial Secretary, Secretary for Justice and Secretary for Food and Health have openly indicated that they have

signed the organ donation cards. They have also registered with the CODR);

- (b) encouraging civil servants to register with the CODR;
- (c) rallying the support of private companies to promote organ donation among their employees and clients;
- (d) engaging different community organisations including religious, healthcare and social welfare agencies to promote organ donation among their faithful, staff and service targets;
- (e) collaborating with schools and educational institutions to organise exhibitions and seminars for students to further garner support for organ donation in the community;
- (f) launching media campaigns on television and other mass media to promote organ donation to the public;
- (g) publicising the launch of the CODR and the message of organ donation through a new Announcement of Public Interest on television and radio channels;
- (h) arranging posters and roving exhibitions in shopping malls and other public venues to promote organ donation and assisting the public in registering with the CODR;
- (i) introducing and promoting the message of organ donation to community leaders through 18 District Councils and the platform of Healthy Cities, and collaborating in community promotion activities;
- (j) disseminating the message of organ donation to public utility users through the bills; and
- (k) promoting through the internet.

9. As at 31 December 2009, a total of 179 organisations, including government departments, private companies and community groups, have indicated support for organ donation. 86 of them have established a hyperlink between their websites and DH's organ donation website to maximise the impact of online publicity. Besides, we have distributed nearly 800 000 promotional leaflets with CODR registration form and organ donation card to the public through promotion activities jointly organised with various bodies, including tertiary institutions and political groups.

10. Meanwhile, we have also taken every opportunity to promote organ donation by giving recognition to organ donors. "Heart-to-Heart" Reunion Party – Celebration

of Hong Kong's 100<sup>th</sup> Heart Transplant' was jointly hosted by DH, HA, HKMA and the Hong Kong Society of Transplant on 12 December 2009 to celebrate the breakthrough of the 100<sup>th</sup> heart transplant operation in Hong Kong and extend heartfelt gratitude to family members of the donors so as to enhance public understanding and support of organ donation and encourage them to register their wish on the CODR.

## **Looking Forward**

11. Promotion of organ donation is an ongoing effort. We will continue to implement the promotion work as mentioned in paragraphs 8-10 above and step up our efforts to widely disseminate the message of organ donation, including signing and carrying organ donation cards and registering with the CODR, to various sectors of the community. Besides, we are planning to systematically instil the message of organ donation to secondary students and to strengthen the promotional effort through 18 District Councils and the platform of Healthy Cities so that the positive message of organ donation can be further disseminated in schools, families and the community. Besides, we will continue to make use of popular electronic media to promulgate the message of organ donation to promote organ donation in a more extensive and comprehensive manner.

12. We hope that, through these efforts, more people will indicate their wish to donate organs after death. More importantly, through various promotion campaigns, we hope to create a general acceptance of organ donation in the society, thus reducing the reluctance of family members to agree to donate the organs of the deceased, and hence increasing the likelihood of successful organ donation, benefitting more patients on the waiting list for organ transplant. We will also continue to explore and coordinate social resources to enhance the effectiveness of the promotion of organ donation.

## **Advice Sought**

13. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

**Food and Health Bureau  
Department of Health  
Hospital Authority  
January 2010**

**Total Number of Organ/Tissue Donations in Public Hospitals (2004-2009)**

<b>Year</b> <b>Organ</b> <b>/Tissue</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>Waiting</b> <b>(As at</b> <b>31.12.2009</b> <b>)</b>
<b>Kidney</b>							
Cadaveric	44	50	53	58	65	87	1602
Living	6	8	13	8	12	7	
<b>Liver</b>							
Cadaveric	20	24	23	26	26	43	
Living	56	38	48	41	42	41	100
<b>Heart</b>	7	8	7	5	6	10	10
<b>Lung</b>	0	2	1	1	1	2	8
<b>Cornea</b> <b>(pieces)</b>	230	214	244	198	211	203	500
<b>Skin</b>	30	13	8	13	19	17	As needed
<b>Bone</b>	4	3	3	1	1	0	