

For discussion on  
14 February 2011

## **Legislative Council Panel on Health Services**

### **Promotion of Organ Donation and Proposed “Garden of Life”**

#### **Purpose**

This paper briefs Members on the progress of the Government’s efforts in promoting organ donation in Hong Kong, including the proposal to establish a “Garden of Life” in the Kowloon Park to give public recognition to organ donation as a commendable life-saving act.

#### **Organ Donation and Transplant**

2. Organ donation saves lives. For patients suffering from end-stage organ failure, organ transplant is often the only cure and helps them gain a new life with much improved quality.

3. Organs/tissues used for transplant come from two sources: living and cadaveric donations. The majority of organs/tissues used for transplant are cadaveric, accounting for about 90% of all organ donations in 2010. Organ transplant in Hong Kong is regulated under the Human Organ Transplant Ordinance to ensure, inter alia, that no commercial dealing is involved in organs for transplant. Currently, there are seven types of organs/tissues for which transplants are conducted in public hospitals. The number of organ/tissue donations in public hospitals under the Hospital Authority (HA), and the number of patients waiting for transplant over the past eight years are at **Annex**.

4. The Department of Health (DH) has set up a Centralised Organ Donation Register (CODR) since November 2008 to provide members of the public with a convenient way (through multiple channels – internet, email, fax, etc.) to register their wish to donate organs after death, as an alternative to signing and carrying organ donation cards with them. The CODR provides a reliable and effective means for transplant coordinators to ascertain, for people who passed away in public hospitals, their previously expressed wish to donate organs after death, and to approach their family as soon as possible to seek their consent to donate organs of the deceased, in order to save patients in urgent need of organ donation.

5. As at 31 December 2010, there were about 69 000<sup>1</sup> members of the public who have registered through the CODR their wish to donate organs after death, representing an increase of more than 23 000 registrations over 2009. According to a survey conducted by DH in September 2010, the major reasons for people to register their wish to donate organs were: (i) “want to help others / seeing it as an act that should be done”; (ii) “emotionally touched by stories of successful organ donation reported in the media”; and (iii) “clicking into and making registration through the CODR website while web surfing”.

## **Promoting Organ Donation**

6. Continuous promotion is needed to impress upon the public the importance of organ donation and to gradually inculcate a culture that is receptive and conducive to organ donation. Our short-term goal is to lessen reluctance and hesitation of individuals and family members regarding organ donation. In the long term, our goal is to create an atmosphere in our society which recognises voluntary organ donation as a commendable act of charity and something that is the norm rather than the exception.

### *Ongoing Initiatives at the Community Level*

7. In pursuit of the long-term and short-term goals on organ donation, DH in collaboration with HA and relevant non-governmental organisations have been making promotional efforts on different fronts, including the following –

- (a) **Institution-based networking:** inviting public bodies, private companies, community organisations including religious, healthcare and social welfare agencies to work in collaboration with the Government to promote organ donation and to encourage registration through the CODR among their institutions;
- (b) **Public education:** conducting roving exhibitions on organ donation in the community, such as shopping malls, Government office buildings and streets, and to collaborate with schools to organise exhibitions and seminars for students, with a view to promoting better understanding of the importance of organ donation among the public especially the younger generations;
- (c) **Media publicity:** launching media campaign on television, radio, the internet and other media channels to promote organ donation to the public. Message has also been disseminated through bills

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<sup>1</sup> Including about 6 000 registrants transferred from the Organ Donation Register of the Hong Kong Medical Association.

of public utilities. In this connection, four new thematic short clips have been aired since November 2010<sup>2</sup>, and video discs containing them were disseminated to schools and organ donation promotion partners in January 2011 for further promotion; and

- (d) **E-engagement:** inviting organisations and institutions to establish in their websites hyperlinks to DH's Organ Donation Website ([www.organdonation.gov.hk](http://www.organdonation.gov.hk)). As at 31 December 2010, a total of 140 organisations, representing an increase of more than 60% over last year, have established a hyperlink between their websites and DH's Organ Donation Website, and another 150 pledged support in other ways.

Through the above promotional activities, we have distributed more than 1.1 million promotional leaflets with CODR registration form to the public.

#### *Celebrating the Second Anniversary of the CODR*

8. Among the promotion activities held in 2010, one of the highlights was the "Celebration Event of the Second Anniversary of the Establishment of the CODR". The event was organised to raise public awareness of and support for organ donation, as well as encourage more people to register through the CODR. At the event, we invited Mr Simon HUI to share his heroic, selfless act in donating his liver to save the life of his colleague in the Customs and Excise Department. Mr HUI further helped disseminate the message of organ donation through DH's promotional activity at the Hong Kong Brands and Products Expo Fair on 2 January 2011.

#### *Proposed "Garden of Life"*

9. In view of the importance of organ donation and to further strengthen our promotional efforts, we propose to establish a "Garden of Life" in the Kowloon Park to give public recognition to organ donation as a commendable life-saving act. A site of approximately 300 square metres inside the Kowloon Park has been identified for this purpose. The "Garden of Life" will be a symbolic landmark on organ donation, using subtle and artistic landscape design and architectural features to express the hope and lives brought by the meritorious acts of organ donation. The Garden will be multi-purposed, serving as an amenities area, an educational site on organ donation, a place for to salute organ donors, and a venue for publicity activities aimed at promoting registration for organ donation through the CODR.

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<sup>2</sup> The four thematic clips promote organ donation from four perspectives: that of patients awaiting organ transplant, that of organ recipients, that of families of organ donors and that of transplant coordinators.

10. The proposal to establish the Garden has the support of the Yau Tsim Mong District Council. Our plan is to have the Garden designed, built and opened for use by end 2011. To tie in with the opening of the Garden, we will organise a major event to further promote organ donation in the community.

### *Organ Donation in Hospital Setting*

11. Apart from encouraging registration for organ donation in the community, it is also important to facilitate organ donation in hospital settings where organ transplants ultimately take place. In this connection, transplant coordinators have been appointed in public hospitals to help, among other duties, identify potential cadaveric donors, counsel relatives of potential donors and obtain their consent for organ donation, and coordinate inter-hospital communication on organ transplant issues.

12. As at 31 December 2010, there were a total of seven transplant coordinators in public hospitals. The family consent rate for solid organ donation<sup>3</sup> was about 50% in 2010, which remains steady over the years. We hope that through promotion and education, we would see an increase in the family consent rate so that the wish of the deceased to donate organs could be realised, and patients in need of organ transplant could benefit.

### **Looking Ahead**

13. In 2011, DH will place emphasis on promoting organ donation among the younger generations, and to strengthen 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. We will also continue to explore new and effective ways to promote organ donation.

### **Advice Sought**

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

**Food and Health Bureau  
Department of Health  
Hospital Authority  
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<sup>3</sup> Solid organ means liver, kidney, heart and lung. Family consent rate for solid organ donation is the number of family consent obtained divided by the number of families approached by transplant coordinators.

**Number of Organ/Tissue Donations in Public Hospitals (2003-2010)**

| Organ/<br>Tissue<br>Donated<br>(cases) | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | No. of<br>patients<br>waiting for<br>transplant<br><br>(as at<br>31.12.2010) |
|----------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <u>Skin</u>                            | 5    | 30   | 13   | 8    | 13   | 19   | 17   | 23   | uncertain                                                                    |
| <u>Cornea</u><br>( <i>piece</i> )      | 198  | 230  | 214  | 244  | 198  | 211  | 203  | 250  | 500                                                                          |
| <u>Bone</u>                            | 0    | 4    | 3    | 3    | 1    | 1    | 0    | 6    | uncertain                                                                    |
| <u>Heart</u>                           | 5    | 7    | 8    | 7    | 5    | 6    | 10   | 13   | 8                                                                            |
| <u>Lung</u>                            | 0    | 0    | 2    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 2    | 2    | 12                                                                           |
| <u>Liver</u><br>( <i>total</i> )       | 55   | 76   | 62   | 71   | 67   | 68   | 84   | 95   | 91                                                                           |
| <i>Cadaveric</i>                       | 19   | 20   | 24   | 23   | 26   | 26   | 43   | 42   |                                                                              |
| <i>Living</i>                          | 36   | 56   | 38   | 48   | 41   | 42   | 41   | 53   |                                                                              |
| <u>Kidney</u><br>( <i>total</i> )      | 49   | 50   | 58   | 66   | 66   | 77   | 95   | 81   | 1621                                                                         |
| <i>Cadaveric</i>                       | 42   | 44   | 50   | 53   | 58   | 65   | 87   | 74   |                                                                              |
| <i>Living</i>                          | 7    | 6    | 8    | 13   | 8    | 12   | 8    | 7    |                                                                              |
| <u>Total</u>                           | 312  | 397  | 360  | 400  | 351  | 383  | 411  | 470  |                                                                              |