

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)973/10-11(09)

Ref : CB2/PL/HS

Panel on Health Services

**Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 14 February 2011**

Promotion of organ donation

Purpose

This paper gives an account of the past discussions by the Panel on Health Services ("the Panel") on the promotion of organ donation.

Background

2. In November 2008, the Department of Health ("DH") launched the Centralised Organ Donation Register ("CODR") to provide multiple channels (including the Internet, email and fax) for members of the public to register their wish to donate organs after death, as an alternative to signing and carrying organ donation cards with them. CODR also enables Transplant Co-ordinators of the Hospital Authority ("HA") to access information of organ donors upon their death through a highly secured computer system to facilitate arrangement for organ transplants.

3. To further promote the culture of organ donation, DH in collaboration with HA and the relevant non-government organizations ("NGOs") have rolled out a series of organ donation activities at the community level since November 2008. 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 with a view to creating a general acceptance of organ donation in society.

Past discussions

Centralised Organ Donation Register

4. Noting that about half of the families of the deceased approached by the Transplant Co-ordinators refused to donate the organs of the deceased, members expressed concern on the reluctance of family members to agree to donate the organs of the deceased. The Administration advised that for cases where the deceased had recorded his/her wish to donate organs after death, more than 90% of their family members agreed to the donation. The main issue was that many people had not recorded their wish about donation or discussed it with their families.

5. Question was raised as to why the prospective donors were not required to indicate, at the time of registration with CODR, the persons to whom they had made their donation wish known. The Administration advised that it would not satisfy the requirement of the Privacy Impact Assessment which provided safeguards with respect to personal data collected for the purpose of establishing CODR.

6. In response to a member's enquiry on whether there was a target on the number of registrants for organ donation to meet the demand of patients in need of organ transplant, the Administration advised that it would be difficult to set such a target since it was not possible to predict when the organs of the registrants would become available and whether they were suitable for the patients in need of organ transplant. Nevertheless, members were advised that as at 8 January 2010, there were about 40 000 registrants on CODR since its launch and about 5 000 registrants on the Hong Kong Medical Association's Organ Donation Register had agreed to transfer their data to CODR.

Promotion campaign on organ donation

7. Members expressed concern that despite the efforts made by the Administration over the years to promote organ donation, the number of people willing to donate their organs after death was still on the low side. Members sought information on whether the Administration had conducted any study to find out the characteristics of people willing to donate organs after death, as such information, if available, would help to shed light on how the promotion campaign should be run to greater effect.

8. The Administration advised that organ donation was being gradually accepted by the community. A telephone interview conducted by DH in April 2007 revealed that about 70% of respondents were willing to donate their organs

after death, as opposed to 29% and 37% in 1992 and 1994 respectively, and that prospective donors tended to be younger, more educated, with females more than males. Based on these findings, the promotion campaign on organ donation would focus on appealing to the working population, such as those working in private companies and NGOs, and university and secondary school students.

Suggestions on promotion of organ donation

9. Noting that the most effective way to boost the number of organ donations and help more patients in need of organ transplant was to encourage prospective donors to register their wish to donate organs on CODR and make known their wish to their families, members gave suggestions on how to further promote organ donation.

10. Members suggested that consideration should be given to instilling in youths that organ donation was a charitable life-saving act through civic education in schools; making the new promotion campaign more family-centred having regard to the importance of family's acceptance; disseminating organ donation message in hospitals/clinics; giving out inexpensive souvenirs to people registered to donate organs after death; encouraging television stations to spread the organ donation message in their programmes, and making use of popular websites to disseminate the message of organ donation.

11. There was another suggestion that the Administration should collaborate with NGOs in making home visits to garner family's acceptance of organ donation, and publicising the problem of a long waiting list for transplant. To help the families make the decision on organ donation, the Administration should also consider enabling the registrants on CODR to leave a personal message to their families about their wish to donate organs after death.

12. A member also suggested rallying the support of social groups, such as university students, who had registered their wish to donate organs after death to promote organ donation amongst their peers, and launching a donor recognition scheme to honour the charitable act of organ donation.

13. The Administration advised that the promotion campaign was an ongoing effort. It aimed at reaching different sectors of the community. For instance, DH would collaborate with schools and educational institutions to organize exhibitions and seminars to enlist the support of students; arrange for organ donation pamphlets to be distributed through utility bills in order to reach households in the community and appeal to social leaders to express support for organ donation. Notwithstanding, the Administration welcomed all possible

ideas of further promoting organ donation in the community.

Latest development

14. At the special meeting of the Panel on 15 October 2010 to receive a briefing from the Secretary for Food and Health on the 2010-2011 Policy Agenda, members were advised, amongst others, that over 60 000 members of the public had registered on CODR as at 30 September 2010.

15. According to the official website of organ donation hosted by DH (<http://www.organdonation.gov.hk>), there were over 69 000 registrants on CODR as at 31 December 2010.

Relevant papers

16. Members are invited to access the Legislative Council website (<http://www.legco.gov.hk>) for details of the relevant paper and minutes of the Panel meetings on 12 February 2007, 10 November 2008 and 8 February 2010.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
10 February 2011