

DH's organ donation promotion vehicle launched today (with photos)

The Department of Health (DH) today (August 16) launched the organ donation promotion vehicle. In the coming three months, the vehicle will visit various locations to encourage members of the public to obtain further information about organ donations and register in the Centralised Organ Donation Register (CODR) on site. A spokesman for the DH called on the public to actively support the benevolent act of organ donations so that more lives can be saved.

The organ donation promotion vehicle will visit various locations in Hong Kong from today until November 13. Members of the public can register their wish to donate organs on site so as to bring hope to patients awaiting organ transplants and to their families. For details of the activities of the promotion vehicle, please visit the thematic website: www.organdonation.gov.hk/en/promotional_activities.html.

The organ donation promotion vehicle was parked at Hennessy Road, Wan Chai, on the first day of its launch. The Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, and the Director of Health, Dr Ronald Lam, visited and showed support to the staff on site. Professor Lo said, "All lives are priceless. Organ donation is a selfless and generous act of benevolence to save lives. Decisions made by donors are voluntary and independent. Registration through the CODR is an effective means to clearly indicate to family members and medical staff one's wish for an organ donation. It also represents the society's support for the culture of organ donations and the hope of patients, which is of great significance."

The spokesman 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 had 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.

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 wish to rekindle the lives of others.

The spokesman stressed that 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 family members, the relevant transplant operation will not be performed.

In this regard, it is 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 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.

Members of the public who have registered their wish to donate organs are encouraged to act as role models to 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 the society.

In addition to registering at the promotion vehicle, the public can also register on 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.

