

HKSAR Government thanks Central Government and relevant Mainland authorities for their concerted efforts in assisting Hong Kong to successfully save life of baby girl

The Health Bureau and the Hospital Authority (HA) announced today (February 17) that, under the strong support and efforts of various Mainland authorities and medical institutions, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) has once again received a cross-boundary organ donation from the Mainland and a heart transplant has successfully been completed for an 8-month-old baby girl, Whitney, at the Hong Kong Children's Hospital (HKCH) yesterday evening (February 16).

The Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, said, "I sincerely thank the country for its care and support for the lives and health of Hong Kong citizens. After a then 4-month-old baby girl, Tsz-hei, successfully received a heart donation from the Mainland in December 2022 to extend her life, Hong Kong and the Mainland has established a close communication channel and procedures for cross-boundary organ transplant co-operation based on that successful experience. The second cross-boundary organ donation case this time has demonstrated a more effective co-operation between the Mainland and Hong Kong. Upon the approval of the Central Government, more than 100 personnel from 18 Mainland authorities including the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council; the National Health Commission; the General Administration of Customs; the Ministry of Public Security; the Ministry of Transport; the Exit and Entry Administration; the Traffic Control Centre of the Guangdong Provincial Public Security Department; the different levels of customs, border control and hospitals of the Guangdong Province and the Shenzhen Municipal; as well as the Centre for the China Organ Transplant Response System (COTRS), worked together and raced against time to ensure the safe and smooth transportation of the organ across multiple locations. This once again exemplified that both the Mainland and Hong Kong share the principle and mission in protecting and saving lives, which is of great significance. The HKSAR Government once again thanks the various Mainland authorities for their strong support to providing emergency assistance to Hong Kong citizens."

The parents of the baby girl, Whitney, would like to express their gratitude for the assistance from different Mainland authorities and the HKSAR Government in finding a suitable heart for Whitney. They are also thankful to the medical teams of both the Mainland and Hong Kong for their unwavering effort in saving Whitney's life. Moreover, they are very thankful for the altruistic decision made by the donor's family during their time of difficulty and consider that their selflessness has given Whitney the chance

for a new life.

Consultant in-charge of the Cardiothoracic Surgery of HKCH, Dr Nicholson Yam, who was in charge of the transplant operation, said the heart procurement operation was performed in the Mainland earlier yesterday by the heart transplant experts sent by the National Quality Control Centre for Health Transplantation in Beijing, while HKCH performed the transplant operation immediately upon receiving the heart in the afternoon on the same day. The operation lasted approximately 6.5 hours. Whitney is now under close monitoring in the Intensive Care Unit and the following 24 hours will still be a critical period.

The Director of Cluster Services of the HA, Dr Simon Tang, said that all efforts have been made through different networks to identify a suitable heart for Whitney amid the difficulties involved. The HA once again expressed its heartfelt appreciation to the related Mainland authorities, the HKSAR Government and the medical teams of the two sides for their active co-ordination, which has led to the successful heart transplant operation for Whitney. "Since there was no suitable recipient in the Mainland, the Mainland decided to send the donor heart to Hong Kong for transplanting to Whitney upon confirmation by experts from the two places that the heart was suitable for Whitney's transplantation. The operation was stringently approved by both the Mainland and Hong Kong regulatory bodies and all procedures were in accordance with the laws of the two places," Dr Tang added.

The Health Bureau and the HA are very grateful to the donor's family for their selfless act in donating the heart of the deceased patient to Whitney, whose life can now be continued, and wish Whitney a speedy recovery. The clinical team will strive to provide the optimal care to Whitney according to her clinical condition and medical needs.