

Organ Donation Day 2024 celebration held today (with photos)

The Health Bureau, the Department of Health (DH) and Radio Television Hong Kong held an event today (November 9) to celebrate Organ Donation Day 2024. With the theme "Pass on hope with a gift of life" this year, the event aims to appeal to all sectors of society for their continued support for organ donations to rekindle hopes for a new lease of life for patients in need of organ transplants.

Officiating at the event, the Acting Secretary for Health, Dr Libby Lee, said, "Organ donations are a selfless and generous act of benevolence to save lives. I am very delighted to see a growing awareness of organ donation among the public in recent years, with more and more people joining the ranks of organ donors. Currently, more than 380 000 individuals have already registered in the Centralised Organ Donation Register. Nevertheless, the number of donor organs is still far from enough to meet the needs of patients, with more than 2 000 patients still awaiting organ transplantation in Hong Kong. Due to limited organs available for transplant, many patients are struggling to battle their diseases every day, with some of them having passed away while waiting for suitable organs. To shorten patients' waiting time for organ transplants and to bring new life to them, we hope that members of the public can actively support organ donation."

The Director of Health, Dr Ronald Lam, also expressed his highest respect to all organ donors and commended their selfless dedication in his speech. Dr Lam said, "Past thematic household surveys conducted by the Government found that among the respondents who were not willing to donate organs after death, the majority cited keeping the body intact as the main reason. For this traditional belief, many religious organisations affirm that organ donation does not violate their religious beliefs, and call on their followers to support organ donation."

With a view to promoting organ donations and inculcating a positive culture of supporting organ donations in Hong Kong, the Government has designated since 2016 the second Saturday of every November as Organ Donation Day and the anniversary of the launching of the Centralised Organ Donation Register (CODR).

Established in 2008, the CODR aims to facilitate the voluntary registration of potential organ donors and properly document their wishes to donate organs after death. Relevant medical personnel involved in organ donation can access the electronic database following a patient's death to ascertain whether the deceased had registered for organ donation prior to passing. This allows timely communication with the deceased's family members to obtain their consent for organ donation to benefit patients awaiting transplants.

At the event, Organ Donation Day 2024 ambassadors Ms Minnie Soo and Mr

Ruco Chan shared their views on supporting organ donations. A family member of an organ donor also spoke on his experience to encourage the public to communicate their wishes to family members as early as possible in order to reduce the latter's hesitation and confusion in making the decision to donate organs upon their death.

The DH has initiated a new round of organ donation promotion campaign last month. From October 18 to November 28, the organ donation promotion vehicle will travel to various locations across the territory for members of the public to register on the spot their intent to donate organs after death. For the parking locations of the organ donation promotion vehicle, please visit the thematic webpage at www.organdonation.gov.hk/en/promotional_activities.html.

The DH will continue to set up organ donation promotion booths at various locations throughout Hong Kong to remind the public of the "3Ss" motto of organ donation i.e. to register their wishes in the central register (Sign up), inform family members (Speak out), and advocate for organ donation among relatives and friends (Spread out).

In addition, members of the public may register on CODR website: www.codr.gov.hk, or send completed registration forms via mail or fax to the CODR Office. The DH urges members of public who have signed an organ donation card to register in the CODR, so that they do not have to worry about losing or forgetting to carry the organ donation card with them.

For further information on organ donations, please visit the thematic website at www.organdonation.gov.hk or the "Organ Donation in Hong Kong" Facebook page at www.facebook.com/organdonationhk.

