

Secretary for Health attends China Organ Donation Day in Shanghai (with photos)

The Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, led a delegation to attend the China Organ Donation Day event held at the Shanghai Medical College of Fudan University today (June 11).

The event was jointly organised by the China Organ Transplantation Development Foundation (COTDF) and the China Organ Donation Administrative Center. Speaking at the event, the Chairman of the China National Organ Donation and Transplantation Committee and Chairman of the expert committee of the COTDF, Professor Huang Jiefu, said that he noticed that some individuals distorted the virtue value of devotion in organ donation in Hong Kong earlier and led to thousands of withdrawal from the Centralised Organ Donation Register. He condemned these fraudulent acts.

Professor Lo said, "The nation has made remarkable achievements worldwide in human organ donation work in recent years, while the China Organ Transplant Response System is also highly recognised by the World Health Organization and The Transplantation Society. The Health Bureau (HHB) is in discussion with the Mainland on the setting up of a standing organ transplant mutual assistance mechanism in a bid to make the best use of donated organs for saving lives.

"Over 2 600 patients with organ failures in Hong Kong are currently awaiting organ transplants while there are only some 30 deceased donors annually. To this end, we are actively exploring the setting up of the mutual assistance mechanism with relevant Mainland authorities, in the hope of offering patients in the two places a higher chance to live a new life through cross-boundary regional mutual assistance.

"The HHB and the Hospital Authority (HA) are now exploring with the Mainland by taking reference from the successful experience of the very first cross-boundary organ transplant case last year. The mechanism being considered is a second-tier mutual assistance allocation mechanism which will only be activated when no suitable patient can be identified for receiving the donated organ in a respective place, and matching is unsuccessful in the local allocation system. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government is actively examining the proposed mechanism with relevant Mainland authorities so as to align the technical requirements, criteria and operational procedures, as well as to ensure that such organ donations are conducted under the principle of benefitting patients with the greatest need in a legal, fair, equitable and safe manner. It is hoped that the mechanism can be put in place as early as possible so that donated organs in Hong Kong and the Mainland be better utilised when no suitable recipient can be identified in the respective place, thus achieving the greatest benefit for

the greater good and giving patients currently on the waiting list an extra chance to live a new life.

"The HKSAR Government has been committed to cultivating a culture of supporting organ donations over the years. The HHB, the Department of Health and the HA will continue to co-operate seamlessly with various professional community partners to advocate organ donations on various fronts. Organ donations are a selfless and generous act of benevolence to save lives, as well as a significant demonstration of the good quality of citizenship," he emphasised.

The delegation will return to Hong Kong from Shanghai in the evening.

