

# Fortis Healthcare dedicates 'Wall of Tribute' to Organ Donors

Salutes the families who have courageously donated organs of their deceased kin to save lives

**Chennai, Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 2016:** Fortis Healthcare Limited dedicated a 'Wall of Tribute' at Fortis Malar Hospital, Adyar to donors and their families who have helped save several lives. The initiative is supported by the **Fortis Organ Retrieval and Transplant (FORT)**. The event was graced by **Dr J Amalorpavanathan**, Convenor, Tamil Nadu Cadaver Transplant Programme, **Dr. Sunil Shroff** from MOHAN Foundation and **Dr. Avnish Seth, Director, Fortis Organ Retrieval and Transplant**.

Fortis believes in the cause of organ donation and is acknowledging the magnanimous souls who pass on the gift of life to others by creating a 'Wall of Tribute' to honor the heroes whose organs have saved many lives. The 'Wall of Tribute' mentions the names of these magnanimous souls, along with the dates when their organs were donated. Just like tiny stars that twinkle in the night sky and selflessly give hope & light to many, these generous souls also selflessly shine on and live on through the lives they've helped. The initiative to honour the families of the deceased is the first of its kind in the country. The event was also graced by the families who took the courageous decision to donate the organs of their loved ones after death.

The cause of Organ Donation does not enjoy a prominent place in the minds of Indians. This is clearly evident in the extremely low donation numbers in India and the lack of awareness on the process of organ donation. India has only 0.5 donors per million while there are more than 30 donors per million in many western countries. Most of the general population has no clue about which organs can be donated, in what circumstances, what is the process of registration, and more of such critical questions. And each year, thousands of people die while waiting for a transplant, because no suitable donor can be found for them.

As a leader in the healthcare sector of India, Fortis has decided to take up the cause of organ donation in an effort to positively impact the well-being of the nation. Fortis realizes that only by driving a systemic change in the perceptions and the behaviour surrounding organ donation, can we increase the number of registered organ donors in India.

At the National level, suggested measures to increase awareness on organ donation include introduction of the topic in school, college and MBBS curriculum, sustained media campaign, involvement of spiritual leaders and inclusion of best practices in organ donation in the accreditation process for hospitals. Most of the organ donation activity is seen in South and Western part of the country. The Transplantation of Human Organs Act Amendment 2011 and Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Rules 2014 should be adopted by all states at the earliest. Other actions suggested at the state level include publication of relevant Government Orders to streamline the process of organ donation, availability of organ-pledging facility at the time of making driving license and computerized registry for potential organ recipients. Recommendations at city level include launching awareness drives, sensitization of police for quick clearance in medico-legal donations and establishment of green corridors for rapid transportation of organs. Hospitals should ensure that 'Declare All, Approach All'

policy is followed for patients with brain death and donor maintenance protocols are implemented by critical care teams.

**Mr. Bhavdeep Singh, CEO, Fortis Healthcare Limited** said, “This initiative is our humble tribute to the deceased as well as their families who have been so noble as to save the lives of strangers. There is a wide chasm between the increasing demand of organs for people at end stages and the paucity of the same. Adding to the complexity is the lack of awareness, simultaneously surrounded by superstitions which present themselves as the key obstacles. Donating organs is a humanitarian cause that will gain momentum with increasing awareness in society. At Fortis, we will continue to contribute as much as we can by educating people and saving more and more lives. We hope this ‘Wall of Tribute’ inspires all, and reminds us that each one of us has more to give”.

**Dr. KR Balakrishnan, Director – Institute of Cardiac Science, Fortis Malar Hospital** said, “Fortis Malar has been in the forefront of things in the scene of organ transplantations in India. Especially in heart transplants the numbers are quite impressive. Tamilnadu has consistently been on top of the chart and improving every year in altruistic organ donations in India. This is due to favourable policies and encouragement of the State Government, the support of the Police department, high levels of awareness among the general public of the state and of course, people coming forward to donate organs as a noble gesture. One can say the transplant scene in Tamilnadu is ‘Highly-evolved’ and is way ahead of other states in the country”.

**Dr CM Thiyagarajan, HOD – Centre of Excellence for Nephrology, Fortis Malar Hospital** said, “Even though the trend of organ donations has been registering an upward curve for several years in India and particularly in Tamilnadu, the gap between demand and supply is still wide. It is estimated that a population of 100 per million suffer from end-stage renal diseases worldwide, which brings the statistics to a whopping 1.2 lakh people who require a kidney transplant to survive. These numbers may be even higher in our country considering the fact that Indians have a lower count of nephrons and the higher incidence of diabetes”.

**Dr. Avnish Seth, Director FORT – Fortis Organ Retrieval and Transplant** said, “The organ donation rate in the country has increased 10-fold over the last 5 years from 0.05 per million to 0.5 per million. People from all walks of life are increasingly saying yes to donation and we are truly humbled by their kind gesture every time. The country needs to take up organ donation as a priority and we in the medical community have to take the lead. Brain deaths occur in up to 30 percent patients who die of head injury or stroke, but go unrecognized or unreported. Those of us who have tried sincerely for organ donation by introducing Standard Operating Procedures, increasing awareness amongst hospital staff and training transplant coordinators have found an acceptance rate amongst families of over 40%, provided the family is happy with the quality of medical care provided to their loved one. We hope that this initiative helps us bridge the wide gap between demand and supply of organs”.

The demand for organ transplantation has rapidly increased all over the world during the past decade due to the increased incidence of vital organ failure, the rising success and greater improvement in post-transplant outcome. However, the unavailability of adequate organs for transplantation to meet the existing demand has resulted in major organ shortage crises. As a result, there has been a major increase in the number of patients on transplant waiting lists as well as in the number of patients dying while on the waiting list. In India, less than 15000 kidney transplants are carried out annually against an estimated requirement of over 2,20,000. Similarly, only 2000 liver transplants are performed every year in a country where over 100,000 perish due to end-stage liver disease, mostly related to preventable

causes such as hepatitis B and hepatitis C. The annual requirement of hearts is estimated to be around 50,000 and lungs about 20,000.

### **About Fortis Healthcare Limited**

Fortis Healthcare Limited is a leading integrated healthcare delivery service provider in India. The healthcare verticals of the company primarily comprise hospitals, diagnostics and day care specialty facilities. Currently, the company operates its healthcare delivery services in India, Dubai, Mauritius and Sri Lanka with 54 healthcare facilities (including projects under development), approximately 10,000 potential beds and 314 diagnostic centres.

### **About FORT**

Fortis Organ Retrieval and Transplant (FORT) provides a registry to pledge ones organs during life and 24-hour referral service for assistance with documentation and procedures related to the process of organ donation. FORT was established in 2012 with an aim to promote and streamline the process of organ donation following brain death in hospitals of Fortis Healthcare Ltd, the largest provider of private healthcare in India. The activities of FORT includes establishing protocol on diagnosis of brain death and organ donation, assistance in applying for and updating brain death committee and retrieval centres, training of transplant coordinators and setting up organ pledging facility. In 2013 over 1112 individuals have already pledged to donate their organs through FORT. This year 932 individuals have pledged their organs from Fortis Memorial Research Institute (FMRI) alone.